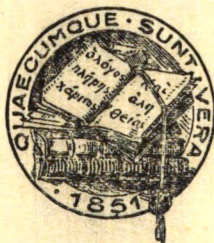




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**HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL**

**MEMOIRS**

**OF**

**PIUS THE SIXTH,**

**AND OF**

**HIS PONTIFICATE,**

**DOWN TO THE PERIOD OF HIS RETIREMENT INTO TUSCANY;**

**CONTAINING**

***CURIOUS AND INTERESTING PARTICULARS,***

**DERIVED FROM THE**

**MOST AUTHENTIC SOURCES OF INFORMATION,**

**CONCERNING**

**HIS PRIVATE LIFE,**

**HIS DISPUTES WITH THE DIFFERENT POWERS OF EUROPE,**

**THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO**

**THE SUBVERSION OF THE PAPAL THRONE—AND**

**THE ROMAN REVOLUTION.**

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**TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.**

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**VOL. I.**  
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THE

## *AUTHOR'S PREFACE.*

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It is not always the great qualities, the illustrious exploits, or the flagrant crimes of a sovereign, that render his reign an epoch important in history. It is sufficient that he should have been the co-operator in important events, or the conspicuous victim of some dreadful calamity; that around him, in his name, in a word, at his very expence, there should have happened some of those circumstances which leave deep impressions upon the memory of mankind.

By these different titles, the pontificate of Pius VI., of which he is already dispossessed, deserves to be presented to public attention, with a few explanations.

It is not his history, however, that we engage to write; we wish only to offer materials for it, arranged upon a philosophic plan. What period, in fact, is more worthy of the attention of the philosopher than that in which the imposing fabric of temporal and spiritual power, surrounded by every thing that seemed to ensure its stability, is on a sudden shaken down, as if by one of those miracles which superstition might have thought its principal support;

support ; when the sceptre and the censer are seen broken by the same blow, the pontiff hurled from his chair, the sovereign from his throne ; his Levites and his courtiers, the members of his spiritual retinue, and those of his temporal council, plundered, imprisoned and dispersed ; thus, by the most dreadful catastrophe, expiating a long series of errors consolidated by ten centuries, a long abuse of human credulity, of pretensions, the insolence of which excited nothing but the smile of contempt ; in short, a conduct emanating, in these latter times, from the blindest phrensy, and such as was best adapted to accelerate its overthrow, even had it been dictated by the enemies of the Holy See ?

How can this sudden fall have been effected without violent shocks, and almost without bloodshed ? What combination of events has then prepared, what immediate causes have led to a result which makes one part of Europe tremble, and strikes the other with stupefaction ? This we shall endeavour to develop in the following picture of the pontificate of Pius VI. We shall abstain from declamation, which we leave to intolerance, as it is only a mark of animosity, and renders all narratives suspicious. In our opinion, sound reason should employ, towards a fallen and unfortunate enemy, neither abuse nor insulting disdain. We wish to justify the title we have assumed, and prove ourselves Historians and Philosophers.

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# HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL MEMOIRS OF PIUS VI.

AND OF

*HIS PONTIFICATE.*

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## CHAPTER I.

*End of the Pontificate of CLEMENT XIV.—Proceedings of  
the Sacred College.*

ON the demise of the fanatical Rezzonico, Ganganelli had, in 1769, been seated upon the papal throne, through the influence of the courts of Madrid and Versailles. They had expelled the Jesuits from their dominions; but the measure remained incomplete as long as that too famous society still existed in the other catholic countries, and, especially, as long as it was acknowledged and protected by the Holy See. Clement XIII. had converted some of its members into powerful and dangerous instruments, that had well nigh occasioned a schism in the church, and embroiled all Europe; or, rather, the Jesuits had made of the pontiff, who was a man more weak than wicked, the blind instrument of their fanaticism and ambition. It was in agitation to lay the axe to the trunk of that immense tree, which threw its baleful shadow over a great part of the Christian world, and of which the widely-spreading roots extended even under the pontifical chair. Cardinal Ganganelli appeared to have justly appreciated this dangerous society. His sound judgment had not been impaired by his abode in a cloister, nor by the honours of the Roman purple. He was prudent and conciliating; and seemed to unite two qualities seldom found together, courage and moderation.

deration. The family of Bourbon was in hopes of obtaining from him the entire destruction of the Jesuits. Their ministers had indeed made it a tacit condition of his elevation to the papal throne, particularly the Spanish ambassador, Don Joseph Monino, afterwards created count of Florida Blanca. Of an active and persevering disposition he earnestly endeavoured to remove Ganganelli's doubts, to combat his scruples, and to quiet his alarms. He had long to struggle against the endless intrigues of the party which he wished to subdue, and which had numerous and powerful adherents, particularly at Rome. At length, on the 21st of July, 1773, he obtained, or rather extorted, the famous bull, *motu proprio*, which pronounced the extinction of the society of Jesuits. At the moment of signing it, Clement XIV. still hesitated, and said, as with a foreknowledge of his fate, *I know very well that I am about to sign my death-warrant; but no matter: the die is cast.*

From that day, fatal to him as well as to the Jesuits, Ganganelli lived a prey to every kind of anguish. The fanatics endeavoured to excite the people to revolt; and threats were held out of an attempt upon his life. His health visibly declined: reassured, however, by the ministers of the two crowns, his courage occasionally revived; and in the month of April, 1774, he announced to the Consistory, for the following year, the jubilee, which since the time of Sixtus V. had been regularly celebrated four times in a century. The celebration of it was reserved for another, Clement XIV. departing this life on the 22d of September following. His death did not excite the public regret to which he had so many claims. The Jesuits and their partisans had the insolence to celebrate it as a triumph; the people, who appeared to behold it with unconcern, accused him of having suffered himself to be deceived by his secret advisers; while the majority of the cardinals still resented his signing of the bull, and complained, almost without exception, that he had withheld from them every mark of confidence.

A report was soon spread that poison had put an end to his days. Though prudently contradicted by the physicians who had attended him during his illness, it gained credit from the indiscretion of the surgeons, who made no scruple of declaring that his body had fallen to pieces as soon as deprived of life. Now that the facts, sheltered from the passions



passions which distorted them, are more easily ascertained, it appears incontestable that poison was really administered to Ganganelli. The cardinal de Bernis entertained no doubt of it, as more than one foreigner, who knew him at Rome, can testify. Gorani, on the contrary, maintains that Clement XIV. died in consequence of the terror with which he was struck, after having signed what he called *his death-warrant*. He must, however, permit us to prefer to his testimony that of individuals who were about Ganganelli's person, even to the last moments of his life, and who could have no motive for the invention of an atrocious crime. The enemies of Clement XIV. had, on the contrary, strong reasons to deny a fact, which rendered him interesting, by holding him up as a victim sacrificed to the fury of party; and it appears, that it is from that suspicious source that Gorani has drawn his notions concerning Ganganelli. He calls in question the authenticity of the letters which were published in his name; and pretends that they could never be the productions of a man who was imbued indeed with theological ideas, but whose information upon all other subjects was very much confined. We think we can venture to assert, that in this respect Gorani is deceived. Those who were intimately acquainted with Ganganelli, and among them this same cardinal de Bernis, who was an excellent judge of men and things, have often affirmed that they have seen the originals of the letters published by Caraccioli; and that it was easy to recognise in them the principles professed by the pope, his philosophical ideas, and his very manner of expressing them. However this may be, some time before his death, the moment of which more than one cardinal could, perhaps, have predicted to a certainty, the Sacred College, animated by a spirit, which most assuredly was not the Holy Ghost, busied itself in intrigues, in order to seat a pontiff more favourable to its views upon the papal throne. The great majority was composed of those *zelanti*, or zealous priests, who will be seen in the sequel of this work playing a principal part during the pontificate of Pius VI. Taken in the mass, they formed the party opposed to that of the two crowns; but there were among them a great many gradations of character. Some, and it was the smaller number, were *zealous* from a blind fanaticism, which was capable of leading them into the greatest excesses: others from a cold conviction, pro-

ductive of obstinacy, but not of religious rage : the greater part were *zelanti* from interest and pride. They stood forth as the strenuous defenders of ecclesiastical immunities, because they partook of the power and splendor thence accruing to the Holy See ; and because the maintenance of those immunities brought into the apostolic coffers treasures which composed a part of their patrimony. It would have required no common effort of philosophy to rid them of their attachment to maxims which insured them homage, power, and gold. Was it in the Sacred College, even at the end of the eighteenth century, that philosophy could hope to find an asylum ?

It contained then, at the death of Ganganelli, furious *zelanti*, such as the Rezzonicos, and the Torrigianis ; and moderate *zelanti*, such as the Albanis and the Colonnas. Some of them were accessible to reason, others to fear, and almost all were more or less attached to the Jesuits. How indeed could it be otherwise ? The Jesuits were the most strenuous supporters, the most artful apologists, and the most devoted servants of the Holy See. Deprived of their support, it resembled a despot after the disbanding of his prætorian guards. They may be said indeed to have been the nobility of the papal monarchy. It was a truth confusedly felt every where ; a truth which the illustrious Montesquieu had been the first clearly to express ; and which experience has since evidently demonstrated, that there was no monarchy without its *noblesse*. We have accordingly seen, that after the abolition of the order of Jesus the papal authority perceptibly declined ; and it is, perhaps, still more to that cause, than to the progress of knowledge, that we may attribute its rapid and easy overthrow.

This was well understood by the *zelanti*, and the numerous party of which they were the chiefs. It was not, however, that they all entertained a wish to resuscitate the defunct society. All were fond of its maxims, and the bosoms of all retained a mixed sentiment of regret and hope. But there were some, who, prudent from timidity, and moderate from their natural disposition, would have been frightened at the violent means that must necessarily have been employed to restore all at once to the Holy See its most effective support ; at the struggles that would have taken place between the pope and the temporal sovereigns ;  
and

and at the calamities that would thence have resulted to the church. They wished to leave to time, to reflection, and to the gradual abatement of the rancorous passions, the care of bringing about the desired revolution; permitting themselves only to accelerate the moment of it by secret intrigues, and by all those artful manœuvres which priests, and Italian priests especially, so well knew how to employ.

It was among these *minor canons* of the *zelanti*, if the expression may be allowed, that cardinal Braschi took his seat. Hitherto he had not been sufficiently important to excite in any party either sentiments of strong affection, or of insurmountable dislike. He was a man of sense; possessed information of a certain kind; and, in his office of treasurer of the Apostolical Chamber, had proved himself not altogether destitute of talents. His face was remarkably fine, and his person commanding; external advantages, which, though not always serviceable to their possessor, are never prejudicial—such were his claims to attention. He was the pupil of Benedict XIV.: this furnished a favourable presumption of his prudence. He had been invested with the purple by Clement XIII. the last of the fanatical popes: this was a reason for his not appearing formidable to the *zelanti*, and even for his allowing them still to retain their hopes.

The reader will not be sorry to be made acquainted with the judgment formed of him, when there was as yet no appearance of his being elevated to the papal throne, by a person equally divested of odious prejudices, and blind partiality; a man not less estimable on account of his moderation and sagacity, than remarkable for the brilliant qualities of his mind: in saying this, we sufficiently indicate the cardinal de Bernis.

This judgment will besides have the merit of comprising a summary of the life of Pius VI. till his exaltation, as well as that of enabling us to compare his pontificate with the opinion that had been previously formed of his character.

“ John Angelo Braschi was born at Cesena, on the 27th of December, 1717. The favours of Benedict XIV. opened to him the road to preferment. Having employed M. Braschi in the management of certain affairs, he rewarded him with a canonry of St. Peter's, by means of which he procured himself a place in the prelature. Clement XIII. afterwards

terwards appointed him auditor of the *Camerlingo*\*, and shortly after treasurer of the Apostolical Chamber†. Although his talents are generally admitted, people have not been wanting to attribute so rapid a fortune to the favour of the Jesuits, to whom it was even said that he had been too complaisant. It appears that the present pope‡, after having bestowed upon him a cardinal's hat, has not continued to shew him the same marks of confidence as before his promotion; a change, upon which the enemies of the cardinal have not failed to put an unfavourable construction. No one can deny that he is possessed of a great deal of activity, and of considerable knowledge of a variety of kinds. Whatever may be the motive that has for some time reduced his credit to the mere respect due to the rank he occupies, it is not supposed that he is of a disposition long to remain quiet in that neglected state. He has sufficient sagacity to find opportunities of rendering himself necessary; or at least to procure himself a certain degree of consideration. It is true, that his reputation of being too enterprising will always be very prejudicial to him. He is, however, a man whose influence in a conclave is not to be despised."

This brief notice of the life and character of Pius VI. before his promotion to the pontificate, is worthy of remark in more respects than one. It proves, that nothing at that time announced him as likely to be thought of for the papal dignity; and that one of the most powerful cardinals felt for him neither a decisive aversion nor regard. It proves, above all, that before he was seated in St. Peter's chair, he was but imperfectly known. In this portrait, drawn by an impartial and enlightened hand, we scarcely find a trace of any of those defects which have by turns devoted him to ridicule and hatred, and of which we are about to see the development in the picture of his pontificate. So true it is, that the good and bad qualities of most men are called forth, if not created, by circumstances; or, rather, that what is  
a slight

\* The place of *Camerlingo* was one of the most distinguished at the court of Rome, but it was merely honorary, and almost a sinecure. The cardinal *Camerlingo* was nominally the chief surveyor of streets and fountains, and put his signature at the bottom of all public acts relative to the finances. He was considered as the principal minister of the Apostolical Chamber; but the real minister of the finances was the treasurer.

† We shall hereafter explain the nature of the Apostolical Chamber.

‡ Clement XIV. was then alive.



a slight defect in one situation becomes a serious mischief in another.

Nothing then at the death of Clement XIV. announced that cardinal Braschi could become his successor. The ministers of the two crowns were only sensible, that it would be impossible for them to make a choice exactly conformable to their wishes. They had it in their power to dictate the exclusion of a few candidates only; but they were afraid of being too lavish of that violent remedy. Among the cardinals, whose elevation they would have desired, some, like Stoppani, who in the last conclave had been the principal competitor of Ganganelli, were verging upon decrepitude; others, like Conti and Simoni, although endowed with talents, and professing moderate principles, did not inspire complete confidence; while others, such as Malvezzi, Negroni, and Zelada, who were distinguished by their abilities and the wisdom of their opinions, had manifested their obsequiousness to the two courts, and their aversion to the Jesuits, too strongly, not to be excluded by a great majority of the Sacred College. Almost all the others were either destitute of capacity, or very suspicious on account of the views they were supposed to entertain.

CHAP.

## CHAPTER II.

*Details concerning the Conclave of 1774.*

WE have just seen what was the state of parties when the conclave opened on the 5th of October, 1774.

From that very day the faction of the *zelanti* endeavoured to carry, as by assault, the election of one of its faithful adherents, cardinal Colonna Pamphili. He was not, by a great deal, the most furious of the party: had he been so, the *zelanti* would never have dared to propose him; but they thought him proper to second their views under cover of his apparent moderation. He was not one of those whose formal exclusion the ministers of the two crowns would have insisted upon: but they were averse to his pretensions: they wished, besides, to gain the time necessary to strengthen their party by the arrival of several cardinals, who were expected from France, Spain, Portugal, and the rest of Italy. This was exactly what the *zelanti* dreaded. The cardinal de Bernis and Don Joseph Monino were obliged, more than once, to assume a very energetic tone, in order to restrain their impatience; while the court of Lisbon, where the imperious Pombal still domineered, spoke to them upon the subject in threatening terms.

Thus was the conclave, from the first moment of its opening, the seat of cabals: every day a new plot was laid, discovered, and defeated. Under the mask of decency and respect, and while the different parties hypocritically invoked the assistance of the Divine Spirit, the most worldly perfidy was reciprocally and profusely put in practice. “Nothing can be more imposing,” said a person who was eye-witness to these intrigues, to his correspondent, “nothing can present a more edifying exterior than the regularity, the piety, and the apparent moderation of the Sacred College; but I can say with truth, that under this sacred veil every honest man must grieve to see so much falsehood, stratagem, equivocation, and deceit. Here all the passions are united and concentrated; and, in the present circumstances, derive additional strength from the revengeful

“vengeful fury of the Jesuits’ party, and from the discontent that prevailed during the last pontificate.”

The Sacred College, however, while granting to the ministers of the two crowns the respite upon which they so strongly insisted, made repeated trials of its strength, and often counted the votes of the different parties. Every day there was at least one ballot, which had no other result than a very small majority in favour of some of the cardinals. In these *coups d’essai* Mark Anthony Colonna obtained the greatest number of suffrages. He was enlightened, virtuous even to austerity, but attached to the Jesuits, and consequently could not be agreeable to the catholic courts. On the other hand, he enjoyed too much consideration, and was of too illustrious a family for the prevailing faction to think seriously of making him pope. He served then, properly speaking, to trifle away time. This game was played for several months, during which Braschi never obtained more than a single vote, and even that was at distant intervals; nor did cardinal de Bernis, nor the minister of Spain, yet foresee in favour of whom the majority would definitively unite. Braschi was beginning only to gain countenance among the partisans of the Jesuits, without whose support he felt that it would be impossible for him to attain the papacy. He perceived no signs of his being personally disagreeable to the two crowns; he had even been living for a long time past in a kind of intimacy with their ministers; and it is not unlikely that he now began to entertain some faint hope of success.

While in expectation of the arrival of the cardinals, for whose presence they were obliged to wait, the *zelanti* redoubled their intrigues. Their most active agent was cardinal J. B. Rezzonico, nephew of the too famous Clement XIII. His talents did not go beyond mediocrity; but he had the memory of his uncle to revenge; wished to serve the cause of the Jesuits; and partook in some degree of the credit of his brother, the cardinal *Camerlingo*. He was therefore one of the most powerful instruments of that party, of which the two cardinals Colonna were the most conspicuous, but not the most dangerous chiefs. Immediately under the Rezzonicos and the Colonnas, stood *Cas-telli*, a sincere enthusiast, whose amiable qualities were spoiled by a large portion of obstinacy; *Boschi*, a man of talents, of a gentle and insinuating disposition, but who had

had signed the famous brief against the Infant of Parma, and who thereby found himself engaged in the cause of the *zelanti*; *Paracciani*, enlightened, but insincere, and solely calculated for intrigue; *Buffalini*, artful, acute, and enjoying great consideration; with several others, who played a less conspicuous part, but who, although in the back ground, rendered essential services to the party. The two crowns then had against them both numbers and talents; and it required nothing less than their political preponderance, and the capacity of their two principal agents, to insure their success. Even with those advantages, it was long disputed, and at last was incomplete. They were obliged, as we are about to see, to capitulate with difficulties.

The long-expected cardinals at last arrived, and from that moment the scene began to change. It was time to put an end to the farce which the *zelanti* were playing, and for the conclave to think seriously of making a choice. Out of thirty-seven cardinals present, sixteen were in the interest of the two crowns. This was enough to prevent the election of a pope decidedly hostile to their views; but as the laws of the conclave require a majority, consisting of at least two thirds of the votes, it was not enough to enable them to dispose of the tiara as they pleased. Besides, the catholic courts were not even agreed among themselves; that of Spain supporting Pallavicini, a near relation of its prime minister, the duke of Grimaldi; and Austria favouring Visconti, who had been nuncio at Vienna.

But these two cardinals had nothing else to recommend them to the notice of the Sacred College; while Braschi, who had discovered considerable skill in conciliating the favour of both parties, and who seemed to have less objections to fear than any other, was powerfully aided by the zeal and address of cardinal Giraud, who had been pope's nuncio in France. The cardinal de Bernis also represented him to his court as an eligible candidate, provided no better could be found; and as great reliance was placed upon his discernment, his opinion met with no opposition. The insinuations of cardinal Giraud were listened to by J. F. Albani, dean of the college, whose character at all times gave him weight; and who derived particular influence from his place during the vacancy of the Holy See. The ministers of France and Spain augured well of his capacity and even of his intentions. Don Joseph Monino, without giving



giving up Pallavicini, thought with the cardinal de Bernis, that Braschi, although a creature of the Rezzonicos, would abstain from all innovation upon the measures of Clement XIV. ; but the Portuguese minister was of opinion that his attachment to the Jesuits was incurable, though pretty well disguised ; and that was still at Lisbon a crime of the deepest die. Corfini, the minister of the court of Vienna, had formerly had a quarrel with him, the remembrance of which was deeply rooted in his mind. This double opposition occasioned the dereliction of a project, that as yet was but in embryo ; and all the brilliant hopes that Braschi had indulged for several days, were completely done away. His name scarcely re-appeared in the following ballots ; and the year 1774 terminated in the midst of uncertainty.

Bernis began to fear that the influence of the two crowns would soon be reduced to little or nothing. He even foresaw the possibility of a choice being made in direct opposition to their views ; and demanded instructions how to act upon such an event.

The cardinals could see no end to the prolongation of the conclave. They recollected with dismay, that the election of Benedict XIV. was the result of six months confinement. Several, who were a prey to disease and to *ennui*, the most cruel of all maladies, came out of their cells ; and even those who made a pastime of intrigue, began to lose all patience.

Some turned their thoughts to cardinal Migazzi, archbishop of Vienna, against whom strong prejudices existed at Rome, previously to his arrival ; but who seemed to place a confidence in the ministers of the two courts ; and began to make some progress in their esteem. He was weakly supported. Others thought of Borromeo, a man of sense, but of a rough temper, and original turn of mind. He was besides too much devoted to the Jesuits. Others proposed Caraccioli ; but he was full of scruples, attached to bulls, and disliked by the two crowns. Their ministers regretted Braschi : they sounded him ; and Braschi affected indifference.

Monino returned to Pallavicini, and Bernis seconded him ; but Pallavicini excited very little interest. They had next some thoughts of reverting to Visconti : he was prudent, gentle, and timid ; but his talents were of too humble

kind : besides the *zelanti* obstinately rejected every candidate proposed by the two crowns.

Cardinal Zelada was brought forward, in order to reconcile the two factions ; a part to which he was admirably suited. It was then agreed upon, that each side should propose three candidates ; and the attempt was twice made, and as often failed. Cardinal Braschi had been brought forward by neither side.

While this was going on, an aperture was discovered in the wall of the conclave ; and by some attributed to curiosity ; by others to intrigue. Neither of them merited the accusation. Intrigue, entirely concentrated in the conclave, had no need of fuel from without ; while indiscretion left curiosity nothing to desire. It was much more probable that a desire to purloin the plate of the cardinals had occasioned this aperture, which was immediately closed ; and nothing remained but the suspicions to which it had given birth.

This little incident served for a moment to beguile the *ennui* of the conclave, which was involved in fresh uncertainty. The ministers of the two crowns, and the cardinals devoted to them, hesitated for some time between Visconti, Pallavicini, and Braschi. The last had thirty-two votes towards the end of January, which was two more than he wanted. The minister of Spain, before he gave up the point, determined to make another effort, and even to exhaust his credit, in favour of Pallavicini ; for the marquis de Grimaldi was highly ambitious of the honour of having the pope for his cousin-german ; and Charles III. who was much attached to his minister, partook of his desire. Catholic by virtue of his crown, and of a pious disposition, he naturally kept up a close connexion with the court of Rome, and could not be indifferent to the choice of a sovereign pontiff. Besides, as Charles III., Grimaldi, and Monino, still harboured a strong resentment against the Jesuits, the mere suspicion of belonging to their party was enough to inspire them with dislike. The court of Versailles, less devout and less hostile to the defunct society, was not so scrupulous. Its only wish was to do nothing that might too much thwart that of Madrid ; and the instructions it sent to Rome amounted to no more.

Pallavicini saw, however, that the kind exertions of Spain in his favour produced no effect ; and, either through  
timidity,

timidity, modesty, or fear lest his failure should be attended with too much *eclât*, testified, with all the energy of which he was capable, that he was afflicted at seeing himself the cause of so much delay. Bernis made use of the most earnest entreaties in order to revive his courage, and to get the better of his scruples. "We will not suffer ourselves to be discouraged," said he; "we will rather remain six months in our cells, should it become necessary." Pallavicini was not to be moved; he formally declared that he would refuse the tiara; and indicated Braschi as the most proper person to reconcile all parties. Monino, who served him rather out of duty than affection, yielded without much reluctance to this determination. Actuated by a regard for the court of Vienna, the ministers of the two crowns made one attempt more in favour of Visconti. The *zelanti* were entirely hostile to him; and it was not worth while to come to an open rupture, nor even to prolong a conclave already so tedious. At length the two principal parties were convinced that it was impossible for them to choose a pope among the cardinals, who were held by them respectively in the highest esteem. Bernis and Monino, who by means of their talents, and the importance of their courts, retained the principal influence, were sensible that, as they could not succeed in spite of the *zelanti*, it became necessary to abandon the contest, and choose from among that party one of those to whom the two crowns had the least dislike. They reverted then to Braschi, whose friend cardinal Giraud had served him with a great deal of zeal. Bernis and Monino completed the conversion of Corsini, the Imperial ambassador, and of the ministers of Portugal and Naples; while cardinal Zelada negotiated with his usual dexterity. He removed a number of difficulties; persuaded the *zelanti* that Braschi could not be dangerous; and offered to be responsible to the ministers of the two crowns for his moderation, his principles, and his faithful observance of the engagements contracted by his predecessor. The road being thus smoothed, the cardinals, on the 24th of February, proceeded to a ballot, in which Braschi was unanimously elected. The Sacred College, according to custom, went immediately in a body to kiss his hand in his cell, and to pay him that first homage to which idolatrous superstition did not scruple to give the name of *adoration*.

Thi

This narrative sufficiently proves that the election of Pius VI. was not preconcerted, and that it was much less the work of the two crowns, than the result of circumstances. Bernis, on entering the conclave, did not suspect that it could ever take place; and when he began to desire it, was still without hopes. He announced it to his court in the following words.

“It is thought that cardinal Braschi will fill his high station with credit to himself: the public at least has always entertained a favourable idea of him; and nobody denies him information, piety, and the most rigorous probity, from which he has never swerved. While yet a young man, he was honoured with the esteem of that enlightened pontiff, Benedict XIV. who opened to him the road to preferment. Although he enjoyed a high degree of favour during the pontificate of Clement XIII. no action was ever imputed to him that could justify a suspicion of fanaticism. Created a cardinal by Clement XIV. whom some evil-disposed persons had prejudiced against him, he submitted silently to his disgrace, and only appeared to recollect the favours he had received. In the beginning of the conclave he beheld with unconcern the project of his election destroyed almost as soon as formed. In a word, the whole of his conduct indicates *an honest man, full of courage, fortitude, prudence, and moderation.* There is no answering, however, for the events which may result from certain circumstances; nor for the change which a too great elevation is apt to produce in the mind and disposition of the greater part of mankind.”—  
“God alone can penetrate to the bottom of the heart; men can only judge by appearances. The reign of the new pope will shew whether, before his election, he wore his own face or a mask.”

Such a horoscope, drawn by so judicious a man as the cardinal de Bernis, was certainly a favourable augury. It was very far, however, from being justified by the pontificate of Pius VI. Not that before his elevation he wore a mask which he afterwards laid aside. Hypocrisy has no place among the defects with which he is reproached; but the performance of his functions has held him out in several points of view, in which the public till then had had no opportunity of seeing him. Though weak and obstinate by turns, it is still more to vanity, of which he had hardly been suspected, when lost in the crowd of cardinals, that his faults

faults and his misfortunes are ascribable. But it would be highly unjust not to set down the greater part of them to the account of circumstances. Neither the firmness of Sixtus V. nor the wisdom of Benedict XIV. would have sufficed to save the bark of St. Peter from the storms of which it was the sport during his long pontificate, and by which it was at last entirely submerged.

### CHAPTER III.

PIUS VI. *upon the Papal Throne—His first Transactions with Spain and Prussia.*

THE turbulent and capricious people of Rome, who, perhaps, resemble the ancient Romans in those qualities alone, did not at first appear to applaud the election of Pius VI. They regarded him as a pupil of those Rezzonicos, whose incautious fanaticism had brought the Holy See into circumstances of such great danger; and applied to him a famous Latin verse, composed under the pontificate of Alexander VI. and importing that Rome had always been ruined by sovereigns who bore the title of *Sextus* :

*Semper sub Sextis perdita Roma fuit.*

In effect, Sextus Tarquinius provoked by his tyranny the expulsion of the kings of Rome; Urban VI. began the great schism of the west; Alexander VI. astonished Rome and the whole world by the enormity of his crimes, and Pius VI. has but too well realized the presentiment suggested by his name. Never did prophecy appear less founded: never was any one more punctually fulfilled.

The new pope, however, spared nothing at first that could conciliate the good opinion of the public. At the moment when his election was proclaimed in the chapel of the conclave, he fell on his knees, and offered up his prayers to heaven in terms so moving, that the whole of his auditory burst into tears. *Venerable fathers*, said he, addressing

dressing himself to the cardinals, *your meeting is at an end; but how unfortunate is the result of it to me!* Was this mere affectation, or did he feel a secret foreboding of the fate that awaited him? He distributed money to the poor; took under his immediate protection a woman little favoured with the gifts of fortune, who had had the care of his infant years; and, in his first distribution of ecclesiastical favours, gave a preference to the most worthy and least opulent prelates. To these benevolent acts he added several acts of firmness. He severely reprimanded the prelate Potenziani, governor of Rome, on account of the disorders which he had not taken care to repress; deprived Nicholas Bischi, præfect of the *annona*\*, of his pension, and compelled him to give in his accounts; declared that he would dismiss all those from their employments who had acquired them by unworthy means; saved the Apostolical Chamber, by suppressing several pensions, an annual expense of forty thousand Roman crowns; and promised to make the cardinals his advisers in all affairs of state. This was recommending himself at the expense of his predecessor, who had been singularly sparing of his confidence. His whole conduct bespoke him humane, easy of access, laborious, and temperate. In a word, his *début* gained him almost every heart. But was there ever a sovereign who did not begin his career in the same way? In a new order of things, is there any man indeed who is not equally fond of giving and of entertaining hopes?

His principal, and most difficult part, was that which he had to play with the ministers of the two crowns, to whom he was indebted for the tiara, and with whom he had entered into engagements so much the more delicate, as they were contradictory to his secret sentiments; for the whole course of his pontificate proved that at the bottom of his heart he was a friend to the Jesuits. His gratitude was also due to the *zelanti*; and who knows what promises he might not have made them? He stood therefore in a very difficult situation. On both sides he was under the influence of fear, and made alternate sacrifices, according as one or other party threatened him with the more imminent danger. He was sensible how much it was his interest to conciliate the favour of the catholic courts, particularly those of Madrid

and

\* A Counsellor charged to superintend the victualling of Rome. We shall speak hereafter of the *annona* and of Nicholas Bischi.

and Versailles ; but he remembered also the tragical end of Ganganelli. Hence those variations and measures apparently contradictory. Both parties attributed them to his duplicity ; while in fact they were only ascribable to that inconsistency which is so naturally attendant upon a want of resolution. Could any thing else indeed be expected from a man who combined weakness of power with weakness of mind ?

To the cardinal de Bernis, however, he behaved with a degree of tractability, which proceeded as much from inclination as from want of firmness. He often asked his advice, and almost always followed it. It even seemed as if he affected to live in intimacy with him, and to give him public testimonies of attachment, and sometimes of deference.

It was not enough for the ministers of the two crowns to have seated in the chair of St. Peter a pontiff on whom they could depend : it was necessary that the persons about him should be such as they approved. This was a condition, a tacit one at least, of his election. They had no difficulty in getting cardinal Pallavicini confirmed in the place of secretary of state, which to them was the most interesting of all.

They would have wished to procure the *datario* for cardinal Malvezzi, who had given proofs of abilities, of virtue, and of his attachment to France ; but he was too odious to the *zelanti* ; and Bernis, who was always prudent and moderate, did not require that Pius VI. should give them too great cause of complaint, especially at the commencement of his career.—Let them, said he, obtain some of those places, more honourable than important, which you have at your disposal ; acquit yourself thus of the obligations you owe them ; but be upon your guard against their counsels. After some hesitation, the *datario* was given to the worthy cardinal Negroni, whom the two crowns would have wished to seat in the chair of St. Peter, in preference to any one else ; and the secretaryship of briefs to cardinal Conti, an honest, laborious, and liberal man, who was much better qualified for the place of secretary of state than Pallavicini. But on every side some little consideration or other was to be kept in view ; and Pius VI. thus passed the whole of his pontificate, sometimes in endeavouring to conciliate the favour of the catholic courts, sometimes of his benefactors, and still more frequently of his enemies.

Hence those vacillations, and those hazardous steps, which either became a source of regret, or made him the object of reproaches ; and hence those half measures which weakened authority and inflamed discontent.

Scarcely was he seated on the papal throne, when the *zelanti*, who affected to consider him as their creature, had cause of complaint. They wished him to become the minister of their vengeance, and the redresser of the pretended wrongs of the former reign. Ricci, the general of the Jesuits, and several other furious partisans of the defunct society, had been confined in the castle of St. Angelo ; and a prosecution had been set on foot against them during the preceding pontificate. According to the *zelanti*, it was proper that the death of Clement XIV. should put an end to these rigorous proceedings. Pius VI. had the courage to declare, that the ordinary forms of justice should be adhered to in regard to the accused ; but this apparent courage was derived from the fear with which he was inspired by count de Florida Blanca, who would not have suffered the smallest attack to be made upon his work. Nothing less than the firmness of that Spanish minister was necessary to countervail the influence of the numerous partisans of the Jesuits ; that is to say, of all who at Rome had either fortune or interest, with the exception of a few cardinals, and of the monastic orders, who were jealous of the society of Jesus. The consequence was, that, during this long pontificate, not six months passed without some attempt being made in its favour. Sometimes endeavours were made to entrap the easy nature of the pope, in order to extort from him some promise or some equivocal measure ; at others, pamphlets were published fanatically injurious to the memory of Clement XIV. Every thing served as a pretence for persecution, or as fuel for animosity. The different passions assumed by turns the mask of religion, in order the more easily to attain their ends. Even the canonisation of saints was made a sort of political concern.

John Palafox, a prelate of the last century, distinguished by his talents and his piety, but still better known by his quarrels with the missionaries of the Jesuits, while he was bishop in Mexico, was become, a hundred years after his death, an object of contention in the catholic church. Recalled to Spain by Philip IV. he was promoted to the diocese of Osma ; led an exemplary life ; died with a high reputation



tion of sanctity; and obtained a place among the beatified. He would have remained quiet in this lower rank of the celestial hierarchy: but the animosity of the court of Madrid against the Jesuits suddenly created an interest in favour of one of their most inveterate enemies; and the canonisation of the venerable Palafox, which was only calculated to gratify the vanity of his family, or to amuse the leisure of devotees, became an affair of state. Scarcely had Charles III. expelled the Jesuits from his dominions, when he requested it with the greatest earnestness. Clement XIV. dying without having been able to satisfy the desire of the catholic king, the first mark of obsequiousness required of his successor was to hasten *this important decision*. He made a show of compliance, but Jesuitical intrigues prolonged delay, accumulated obstacles, and thus favoured the secret repugnance of Pius VI. More important affairs called off the attention of the court of Spain. Charles III. died, and was succeeded by his son, who inherited not only his throne, but his piety and his prejudices against the Jesuits. One of the first requests that he made of the sovereign pontiff was the canonisation of the venerable Palafox. The congregation *dei riti* collected all the documents that could throw a doubt upon his orthodoxy; among others his correspondence with the university of Louvain. These were valuable materials for the personage, who, in the ridiculous language of canonisations, was called *the devil's advocate*. The cabal profited by them; and Palafox, notwithstanding the interest taken by Spain in his posthumous glory, was for a long time reduced to the humbler honours of beatification. The Jesuits alone were sensible of this obscure triumph.

They obtained, however, less contested successes, which proved a source of trouble to the unfortunate Pius VI. whose secret wishes were constantly at variance with his ostensible engagements. Who could have foreseen that the society of Jesus, banished from the countries devoted to superstition, would find an asylum and undisguised protection among heretics and schismatics? Two sovereigns, perhaps the most distinguished of the eighteenth century for their wisdom and talents for government, considered it as a kind of point of honour to receive into their dominions the wreck of the proscribed society. They saw in its members neither the professors of a corrupt system of morality, dan-

gerous to subjects, and still more dangerous to kings, nor intriguers, making religion serve as the mask and instrument of their ambition. They saw in them nothing but enlightened men, proper, in many respects, for public instruction. Determined to watch over their conduct; to keep them within bounds; and to admit them neither into their courts nor into their confessionals, how could they look upon them in a dangerous light? Such, no doubt, was the reasoning of Frederic the Great, and of the Imperial Catharine.

Frederic II. who had a great many catholics in his dominions, could not avoid keeping up some intercourse with the Holy See; and had an agent constantly resident at Rome. This was the abbé Ciofani, a man much devoted to the society of Jesus. His principal wish was to restore it to its pristine situation; the great object of his mission to obtain a decision concerning the establishment of the Jesuits in some of the provinces of the Prussian monarchy. Would any one believe that the great Frederic intimated to the pope, that, as he had not been consulted concerning the suppression of the order, he had a right to consider that event as never having taken place, and totally to disregard it, by leaving the Jesuits in his dominions upon the same footing as before? It will readily be believed, that the abbé Ciofani neither softened the expression of Frederic's discontent, nor transmitted to him very faithfully the circumspcct answers which he obtained from the pope. The king of Prussia was resolved to retain the Jesuits in his kingdom, in order to employ them in the education of youth. It was of little consequence to him whether they were faithful or not to their vows, and to the statutes of their order; but he wished them to be contented, and to live with him in the way most agreeable to his views. Deceived, no doubt, by his agent, or feigning to be so, he affirmed, in a public declaration, that the sovereign pontiff would not oppose the preservation of the society in Prussia; and when this declaration was communicated to the pope, the latter said, according at least to the abbé Ciofani, "that it was not in his power to rescind the decision of his predecessor, on account of the powerful opposition of the catholic courts; but that he *solemnly* promised that he never would declare the society forming in Prussia to be an irregular establishment."

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Informed of this singular promise, the ministers of France and Spain reproached Pius VI. in the strongest terms, and charged him with duplicity. The pope excused himself in the best way he was able; pretended that his words had been misinterpreted; and renewed his engagements. He behaved to his severe tutors with an appearance at least of tractability; and never fawned more upon the cardinal de Bernis than after having received a reprimand. He was still more afraid of the minister of Spain, whose court was more peremptory and punctilious than that of Versailles, and who was himself far more irritable than the cardinal de Bernis. No wonder then if Pius VI. experienced a joyful sensation, which he found it difficult to disguise, when M. de Florida Blanca was recalled to Madrid in 1777, to take upon him the principal administration of affairs. Spain was then represented at Rome by the duke of Grimaldi, who succeeded count de Florida Blanca, and by the chevalier Azara, who had been long in Italy, honoured with the confidence of his court, to which he had such a variety of claims. But the pope soon saw that he had gained nothing by a change, on which he had at first congratulated himself. The duke of Grimaldi, an honest and well meaning man, but easy to be misled, and seeing every thing with the eyes of his relation Pallavicini, appeared to adhere to the party opposed to the two crowns, and inspired it with new hopes. But his embassy was little less than an honourable retreat, in which it was meant that he should enjoy *otium cum dignitate*. He was frequently absent; but the chevalier Azara did not for a moment lose sight of the Holy See. His vigilance and his firmness were often troublesome; but he joined to his austere counsels marks of kindness, which conciliated at once the good-will and the confidence of the pope; and it may now be said that his influence, and that of the cardinal de Bernis, with whom he always lived upon terms of the greatest intimacy, saved Pius VI. from the commission of many faults, and contributed, perhaps, to delay the subversion of the papal throne.

As to the king of Prussia, he was determined to retain the Jesuits in his dominions in some shape or other. In a letter, which he wrote as long ago as the year 1775, to one of the society then at Breslau, he expressed himself to this effect: "They may depend upon my protection. Neither the pope, nor any one else, has a right to prescribe rules for

for my conduct. I promised the Imperial court, in the last treaty of peace, that I would maintain the catholic clergy in the state in which I found it. I will keep my word; and if every one else chooses to consult nothing but his own pleasure, I, for my part, will drive all the rest of the priesthood out of my dominions, and keep you Jesuits alone." A letter written to M. d'Alembert, about the same time, when he was recovering from an illness which had nearly cost him his life, contains the following passage: "I have lived long enough to see strange things come to pass. I have seen the pope's soldiers wear my uniform; the Jesuits choose me for their general; and Voltaire write like an old woman."

It was not, however, out of any malevolent obstinacy that he protected the Jesuits. "I have," he was accustomed to say, "a million and a half of catholics among my subjects. It is of consequence to me that they should be brought up strictly and uniformly in the religion of their forefathers. The Jesuits have given proofs of their talents for education; and it is only by existing in a body that their task can be properly fulfilled. I am determined, then, that they shall so exist, upon condition of their submitting, in other respects, to the ecclesiastical laws which the pope may think fit to prescribe." Pius VI., in order to avoid giving offence to the catholic courts, required that they should lay aside the habit of their order, which they continued to wear in Silesia; and that they should abstain from preaching and administering the sacrament. At the beginning of 1776 the bishop of Breslau communicated to them the intentions of the pope, which were also those of the king of Prussia. They obeyed; but new storms arose on their account in the other parts of Europe, where they flattered themselves with the enjoyment of a less equivocal existence. Pius VI. tormented by France and Spain, assumed from time to time, in regard to the society, an intolerant language, which was foreign to his heart. Those in particular, who were in Polish Prussia, gave rise to complaints, because they continued to live together according to monastic rules. But Frederic explained himself, on this occasion, in such a way as to stop the pontiff's mouth: "I will consent," said he, in a letter written in 1779 to the bishop of Culm, in whose diocese the Jesuits were established; "I will consent to sacrifice their name

name and habit to the will of the pope ; but as to the essential-part of their institution it shall remain untouched, and upon the same footing as in Silesia, in order to favour the improvement of the youth committed to their care."

It was thus that the company of Jesus continued to exist in Polish Prussia and in Silesia. This was quite enough to prevent the partisans of that too-famous society from losing all hope ; and gave them room to say—the Jesuits are persecuted, dispersed, and suppressed ; but not annihilated. The catholic courts familiarised themselves by degrees with this exception ; but their vigilance was only the more active to hinder the Jesuits from obtaining farther triumphs. As to Frederic II. he readily pardoned Pius VI. the transient opposition which he had experienced, and with the source of which he was well acquainted. He even retained for that pontiff, whose faults were often imputable to himself, still oftener to circumstances, a kind affection, which manifested itself on several occasions, when he saw him engaged in a contest with Joseph II., who undertook to make reforms, justified by sound policy, but afflicting to the church. He wrote to M. d'Alembert as follows : " The  
" only thing that vexes me is, that all this good was not  
" done under popes who merited humiliation ; and that it  
" should have been reserved precisely for the worthy Bras-  
" chi ; the man who has drained the Pontine marshes."

Independently of his personal affection for Pius VI., he attached more importance to the keeping up of a friendly connexion with the Holy See than could have been expected from a prince so superior to empty formalities. The title of king, which the elector of Brandenburg had only borne since the beginning of the century, had not yet been acknowledged by the popes ; and he wished to make that acknowledgment the object of a sort of negotiation. During the time that Pius VI. was at Vienna, the baron de Reidesel, the Prussian minister there, applied for it personally to the pope, and obtained it in a private audience. Upon his return to Rome, he began to give the title of king, in his briefs, to the great Frederic. It may be made a question, which of the two was the most honoured by this favour ? Count Hertzberg, who knew how to set a just value upon it, as well as his master ; but who did not, however, deem it unworthy solicitation, thought no doubt that it was calculated to increase the king of Prussia's consequence in the eyes of his catholic subjects ; and that nothing, having that tendency, ought to be overlooked.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Troublesome Disputes of PIUS VI. with CATHERINE II.*

AMONG the singular occurrences that distinguish the end of the present century, few are more worthy of remark than the violent expulsion of the Jesuits by the most pious monarchs of Christendom; their proscription, however reluctant, by the Holy See; and the kind reception they met with from two philosophical sovereigns; one a heretic, and the other a schismatic. Frederic the Great, and Catherine II., equally intent upon extraordinary things, thought they should throw a new ray of glory upon their reign, by protecting the illustrious victims of oppression; by welcoming to their dominions men renowned for their talents; and by redressing the wrongs they had suffered from the spirit of persecution. The motives of their determination were, perhaps, combined with a feeling of ill-will towards those pious sovereigns who drove away the ablest champions of their holy religion, and with a proud desire to prove that the dangers, which had served as a pretence for that important measure, were such as could alarm only pusillanimous minds. But they were still more strongly impelled by the desire to give to public instruction, in their respective states, a form which, whatever since may have been said of it, had certainly received the sanction of experience in several catholic countries. They were both too wise to take such a step merely through malice or out of ostentation.

However this may be, such of the Ex-Jesuits as had not taken refuge in the ecclesiastical state had sought and obtained an asylum in countries of which the sovereigns, though independent of the church of Rome, reckoned a number of catholics among their subjects: some retired to Polish Prussia; some to Silesia; and others to White Russia. They were living peaceably in the latter province, when a noble Lithuanian, bishop of Mallo *in partibus*, who was resident at Mohilow, with the title of apostolical visitor, and who, from thence, kept up a constant correspondence with the numerous friends of the society at Rome, thought proper most  
strangely

strangely to exceed the powers given him by the pope. He permitted the Jesuits of White Russia to take novices, in conformity, as he said, with *the intentions of Clement XIV. and of Pius VI.* Pius VI. was dangerously ill; and the cardinals, tired of the length of his reign (it had already lasted more than four years), looked to its speedy close. Now was the moment to give, in a distant quarter, the signal for the resurrection of the Jesuits. Before the demand that would have been made could be publicly known, Pius VI. would be no more. His successor, whatever his principles might be, would find it a settled thing; it would be represented as the work of the deceased pope; and might, perhaps, be respected by the catholic courts, who would be afraid of exposing the church to new dangers. Those who were the most exasperated against the Jesuits were at a great distance; and their murmurs might be disregarded, and rendered of no avail.

The event baffled all conjecture. Pius VI. recovered; and his convalescence was greeted by the most severe remonstrances on the part of the ministers of France and Spain. They reproached him with the ambiguous manner in which the powers given to the bishop of Mallo had been worded. That daring prelate was born a Calvinist; turned Catholic at the death of his father; married; was left a widower; entered into holy orders; began from that moment to act the apostle; made Warsaw the centre of his pious labours; found means to interest in his favour the Russian ministers who were all-powerful there; gained the friendship of Garampi, the pope's nuncio, a zealous partizan of the Jesuits; was, upon his guarantee, and the formal demand of Russia, appointed bishop *in partibus*; and immediately assumed the title of bishop of Mohilow and of White Russia. Such was this adventurer, who played the part of a fanatic, though he hardly believed in God. He involved Pius VI. in one of the greatest embarrassments which he ever experienced; prevailed upon the Imperial Catherine to espouse his cause with a tenacity and haughtiness which she seemed to reserve only for affairs of the highest importance; and occupied Europe for several years with the consequences of his ignoble intrigue.

But what could he have done if he had not met with powerful support even at Rome itself? The brief, of which he had made so improper a use, had been drawn up by  
Borgia,

Borgia, secretary to the *propaganda*, an artful prelate, whose affections were well known; and (as was often the case with the precepts of our bishops) had not even been read by Pius VI. His confusion was only the greater, and his perplexity not the less. What could he do to appease France and Spain, without offending Catherine II., without irritating her against the catholics in her dominions? He was required, however, to disavow in the most formal manner the conduct of the bishop of Mallo, and to threaten him with canonical penalties, if he did not hasten to recal his mandate. Nothing was neglected to extort that revocation. Spain solicited it directly at Petersburg, where at that moment she was not in favour, on account of the recent stoppage of some Russian ships. The imperious Catherine answered, through the medium of Czernichew, that as the king of Spain had, doubtless, had his reasons for expelling the Jesuits from his territories, she had her's for retaining them in her empire. The intercession of the king of Poland was employed. Catherine answered him in her own hand-writing: "I thank you for your interposition," said she; "but as the affair in question is merely æconomical, I stand in need of neither mediation nor treaty. I am certainly mistress in my own dominions." Stanislaus returned to the charge, and Catherine replied; "I will maintain the ordinance of the bishop of Mohilow, which has received my approbation; and if the pope proceed against him, I will protect him. I will rather consent to a schism, than to make any change to the establishment of the Jesuits in White Russia." It was not, however, that she felt any great affection for the Jesuits. She knew how little they were worth, bating their talents for public instruction; but she was piqued, and her ill humour carried her beyond the limits prescribed by her intentions, as well as by her interest.

There was at that time at Warsaw a nuncio (Archetti) of a mild and conciliating disposition, who undertook to disarm the resentment of the great Catherine, and to spare the pope any farther mortification. He obtained permission to convey to him some obliging expressions.

The courts of Madrid and Versailles ceased to act in a direct manner. They were engaged in concerns of far higher importance; for this was the period in which they were making preparations for their war with England.

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They contented themselves therefore with harassing the feeble pontiff, who, by dint of temporising, and under favour of circumstances, extricated himself from this critical situation better than he could have hoped. But how much torture must he have previously endured ?

In consequence of the solicitations of the catholic courts, he requested that the brief for the suppression of the Jesuits might be published in Russia. This was an expedient for annihilating the work of the prelate of Mohilow. In order to succeed, he had recourse to a system of wheedling, against which the great Catherine was not entirely proof. Till then the sovereign of Russia was not considered by the Holy See as invested with the dignity of emperor. Pius VI. wrote to Catherine, and, for the first time, intitled her, *Her Imperial Majesty*. Her vanity was flattered; her answer was kind, and almost affectionate; but she remained inexorable as to the brief of suppression. In vain did the pope point out to her the example of the king of Prussia. Every sovereign, answered she, is master in his own dominions; and never, while I am alive, shall a bull be published in mine. This transient smile of benevolence soon gave place to a new paroxysm of ill-humour. Surely nothing but the influence of the unlucky planet, under which Pius VI. was born, could have engaged him in such frequent and such unpleasant disputes with schismatic princes, whose states were so far distant from his own. Believing Catherine a little softened, he wrote to her a ceremonious letter, to request that the archbishopric of Poloczko, which made part of her empire, should, according to custom, be intrusted to an *united Greek*. Catherine, still piqued at the molestation given to her *protégé*, answered the pope; but she did it in the Russian language, annexing a Greek translation to her letter; measuring her answer, line for line, by the pope's epistle; concluding in the same words as he had done; and putting at the head of it, *Catherine II., empress of all the Russias, to Pius VI. bishop of Rome, and pope in his own district*. The contents of this letter were answerable to the form. It was neither obliging to the pope, nor favourable to his request; to which Catherine would accede only upon condition that the see of Mohilow should be erected into an archbishopric, and given to the bishop of Mallo. Hence new sources of chagrin and embarrassment to Pius VI. How was he to extricate himself from this difficulty? If he kept

no

no measures with the empress he would be the occasion of five hundred thousand *united Greeks*, scattered throughout the Russian empire, being lost to the Holy See. But how, on the other hand, could he brave the anger of the courts of Versailles and Madrid, whose ministers required a solemn recantation from the bishop of Mallo, previously to his obtaining the favour solicited for him by the empress?

Resolving, towards the end of 1781, to make a new attempt to appease her wrath, he represented to her, in a lamentable tone, that he could not, without degrading himself, and without incurring a charge of weakness and pusillanimity, recompense a prelate who had dared to put a false construction upon one of his briefs, and to attack the bull of suppression; but let him only retract, and he should consider it as his duty to comply with the desire of the empress. At this time the journey of the count and countess du Nord was in agitation. Pius VI. testified the concern he took in their welfare; and recommended to her the catholics of Russia. The letter was entirely in his own handwriting, and full of the most flattering expressions. It was prelate, afterwards cardinal Antonelli, whom he had employed to compose it; and Antonelli was artful and insinuating, and was already in possession of the confidence of Pius VI. as much as it was possible for any one to be.

Catherine, who often blended the coquetry of her sex with an imperious display of her power, began her answer by a flattering preamble. She spoke to him of her children; and praised him for his successful efforts to drain the Pontine marshes; and for thus insuring his own glory, and the prosperity of his dominions; but when she came to the point, she said that she had availed herself of her right, in conferring upon the bishop of Mallo the archbishopric of Mohilow; that no just reproach could be brought against that prelate; and that he had only obeyed her like a subject submissive to the will of his sovereign. She concluded by soliciting the pall\* for him, without saying a word of his recantation. *At the same time we join our voice to that of our orthodox church, which prays God for the re-union of all.*

This

\* An ornament which the pope sends to archbishops as a mark of their dignity.

This grave negotiation, which no doubt served Catherine and her courtiers as matter of amusement, was suspended for some time by a somewhat more serious quarrel between the pope and Joseph II., and by the former's journey to Vienna. The affair of Mohilow was, however, recalled to the recollection of Pius VI. during his stay in that capital, Joseph spoke to him with enthusiasm of Catherine II.; exhorted him earnestly to gratify her; and pointed out the inutility, and even the danger, of resistance. The poor pontiff returned to Rome, more undecided than ever: and on his arrival there was again beset by the remonstrances of his tutors, the French and Spanish ministers. They distrusted his firmness, and even his intentions; but became somewhat more moderate in their demands, only requiring him to address a declaration to each of the two kings, stating anew that he considered the suppression of the Jesuits as irrevocable.

Pius VI. begged they would be contented with the disapprobation he had expressed of the conduct of the bishop of Mallo, through the medium of his nuncio at Warsaw.

But in the mean time a new incident had occurred, tending to increase his perplexity, in an affair that had already given him so much uneasiness. Catherine II. impatient of delay, perhaps vexed at the kind of homage which she had paid to the head of a church distinct from her own; excited against him by Czernichew, the great protector of the refractory prelate; by prince Potemkin, whom pride and the rest of the worldly passions did not prevent from casting a look of kindness upon a religious order; and by the harsh and haughty Stackelberg, who was irritated by the slightest resistance; Catherine II. had granted the Jesuits in her dominions the power of electing a vicar-general to preside over the society, *with all the privileges which that institution formerly enjoyed*; provided only that they were compatible with the laws of her empire; and, without waiting any longer for the consent of the Holy See, she intitled the bishop of Mallo archbishop of Mohilow, of the *Roman church*.

Stackelberg, on his part, declared, that Catherine II. absolutely refused to comply with the demands of the pope; and that if he did not immediately send the pall to the bishop of Mallo, and at the same time appoint an Ex-Jesuit, towards

towards whom she was favourably disposed, to be his coadjutor, she would expel all the catholics from her dominions, and proscribe their religion as incompatible with the dignity and authority of sovereigns. The Russian minister, who did not say a single word of the appointment of an *united Greek* to the archbishopric of Poloczko, sent a copy of his declaration to Vienna, in order that the court of Rome might not fail to be informed of it by Garampi, its nuncio. Never was weakness treated by arrogance with a greater want of feeling. At Warsaw the nuncio Archetti was struck with consternation; at Versailles, and even at Madrid, great concern was felt for the unfortunate pontiff, who was expiating a thoughtless moment in so painful a manner; while at Rome enlightened observers foresaw the approaching fall of a throne, stripped on every side of those illusions in which alone its solidity consisted.

Pius VI. was no longer sensible to any thing but the dread with which he was inspired by the distant wrath of Catherine. He was in hopes that the kings of France and Spain would be contented with the brief addressed to each of them, by which he declared every thing that had been done contrary to the bull of Clement XIV. either in White Russia or elsewhere, to be *illegal, abusive, and of no effect*; that the two monarchs, engaged in concerns of greater importance, would require nothing more; and that nothing would be wanting to the triumph of Catherine's *protégé*.

Nor was this all. It was necessary to appease the august protectress. Pius VI. wrote to her again in the following terms: "You will have some regard for my dignity; you will not allow it to be said that one of your subjects has offended me with impunity. Well, I will send a minister authorised to convert the see of Mohilow into an archbishopric, and to deliver the pall to the new archbishop; but your Imperial majesty must suffer me to add to these proofs of deference this single clause: *without prejudice to the maxims of the Roman catholic church*."

In the mean time Benilawski, the Ex-Jesuit, who was to be the coadjutor of the new archbishop, set off for Italy at the beginning of 1783, in order, as it would seem, to set the Holy See more completely at defiance. In every place through which he passed he flattered his friends with the speedy re-establishment of the Jesuits. He shewed rescripts, already of old date, in which Pius VI. permitted them to remain

remain in *statu quo*, wherever the bull of suppression had not been published. He arrived at Rome, and obtained from the pope a first audience, the particulars of which transpired, and alarmed the two catholic ministers. Cardinal de Bernis endeavoured to enforce his old claims upon the tractability and confidence of the pontiff; but he found him terrified and overawed; and heard him make with his own mouth the apology of the bishop of Mallo. Benilawski was introduced by the agent of Russia, and recommended to him by count Panin. How then could he do otherwise than give him a gracious reception?

As yet, however, Pius VI. was only beginning to give way. Benilawski, who, under the meanest exterior, concealed a great share of effrontery and address, spared nothing to intimidate and to corrupt him. He was authorised by the empress of Russia to require that the pope should formally acknowledge the Jesuits established in her empire; and that he should grant to those who were employed in the ecclesiastical ministry the same powers as to bishops. He endeavoured to justify the bishop of Mallo in every respect. Pius VI. deliberated; shifted his ground; and would have yielded but for the austere counsels of cardinal de Bernis. Benilawski grew pressing; declared that he would set off immediately, if kept any longer in suspense, and was constantly at the heels of the pontiff. Pius VI. avoided him. The impudent monk then declared that he would not stir from the anti-chamber till the pope should admit him, and acquiesce in all his demands. His vanity and imprudence were equal to his effrontery. He thought himself so sure of the dignity of prelate, that he purchased the cross and pastoral ring before-hand; had himself painted in the episcopal habit; and boasted that he was about to be ordained by the pope in person. He connected him closely with Zaccaria and Ambrogio, the two Ex-Jesuits the most remarkable for their fanaticism; and held out his sovereign's resentment as a threat. Pius VI. resisted like a man prepared to yield. It was easy to see that, being in his nature a slave to fear, he only exchanged his dread of the house of Bourbon for a still greater awe of Catherine II.; and that the more readily, as the latter sentiment did not ill accord with his secret affections.

In the mean time he received Catherine's answer to his submissive letter; and his vanity had a few moments of enjoyment,

joyment, which consoled him for every thing. The empress called him *most puissant prince*; and thanked him for the good grace with which he had been pleased to bestow the pall upon a man of such great merit as the bishop of Mallo, whom she had *confirmed* archbishop of Mohilow, giving him for his coadjutor the canon Benilawski. She would receive, she said, the minister whom his holiness meant to send to her court, in like manner as she did *the ambassadors of crowned heads*. She even spoke to him of the gratitude she should feel in case of his attending to her request; but all the rest she passed over in silence. She concluded by saying, that she constantly addressed her prayers to heaven for the union of the church of Rome with *her orthodox church*.

The return of the empress's favour restored some little courage to the holy father. He dismissed Benilawski politely, but coldly, and without having granted any thing to his importunity; his direct intercourse with the great Catherine exempting him from all necessity of negotiating with her ridiculous agent.

But immediately afterwards, Archetti, the nuncio, received orders to set off for Petersburg; and his mission gave rise to a new storm. The bishop of Mallo had accompanied Potemkin to the Crimea. He was sent for to Petersburg, where he found Archetti, who was dispatched thither principally on his account by the pope. A nuncio at the extremity of the Baltic sea, accredited at the court of a schismatic, and, what was worse, a philosophical prince! This was indeed a novel spectacle; and Archetti might have said, like a certain doge of Genoa, the most remarkable thing I see at Petersburg is to see myself there. He was at first well received; but it soon appeared that he expressed himself with too much bitterness when speaking of the Jesuits. He was also blamed for going to envenom his hatred against them in the society of the Spanish minister. From the very outset the negotiation was obstructed by a number of little difficulties; Catherine II. wishing to obtain every thing from the pope before she granted him any thing whatever. In the first place it was necessary to attend to the consecration of the new archbishop of Mohilow. Archetti being questioned relative to the kind of oath which that prelate would be expected to take, answered, that he must swear *not to tolerate heretics and schismatics*. However  
strange

strange such a condition may appear, it existed in the nuncio's instructions; from which he could not venture to depart. He was bluntly told that those instructions betrayed *a want of sense and of reflection*; that it was ridiculous to impose upon a subject the obligation of persecuting those who lived under the same sovereign as himself; and that as long as such a thing was in question, the empress would not appoint an *united Greek* to the see of Polockzo. At length, however, every thing was arranged. The nuncio was authorised to pass over the ridiculous oath in silence; and Mohilow was erected into an archbishopric, and conferred by the empress upon the bishop of Mallo. Archetti extolled him to the skies, and consecrated him, as well as his coadjutor, Benilawski; and, in all these formalities, the name of the Jesuits was not once pronounced. The only thing that Pius VI. did for the satisfaction of the catholic crowns, who were pleased to insist upon no more, was formally to except all the religious orders, whose existence and institution were not approved of by the Holy See, when he was renewing the powers of the new archbishop of Mohilow, in regard to the regular clergy of his vast diocese.

The Jesuits, nevertheless, considered Archetti's mission as a triumph. The vicar-general of that order dying in the course of 1785, they inserted a notice of it in the Warsaw Gazette, accompanying it with all the details of their establishment in Russia; and observing that the bull of suppression could have no effect in the states in which it had not been published. The next year they did more. To all the libels which they had circulated, in order to frighten some, and to revive the courage of others, they added a new one, in which they endeavoured to prove, the continuation of their society in White Russia, and insinuated that the Holy See favoured their success.

The catholic courts renewed their complaints, and obtained nothing but vain protestations. The pope began to be familiar with war; and appeared to be little moved by the intrigues of the Jesuits, or by the accusations to which they gave birth. Without offending the crowns, with which he wished to remain in amity, in too direct a manner, he had reconciled himself to the great Catherine; and had kept up a political connection with her in the face of all Europe. He had insured her powerful protection to five hundred thousand of his flock, lost in the vast empire of

Russia. His vanity was gratified, his conscience was at rest.

The empress of Russia, who lost no opportunity of throwing every kind of lustre upon her reign, pleased herself with the idea of seeing a prelate seated in the Sacred College upon her recommendation. Archetti, the nuncio, had been sent to her court upon a mission, with the result of which she had reason to be satisfied. A cardinal's hat was to be his reward. She requested the pope to bestow one on him; but he was fearful of offending the catholic powers, who alone had the right of nominating cardinals. Some futile distinctions, however, saved their pretensions; and Archetti was appointed cardinal out of the regular course, while he was still at Petersburg. Catherine conceived the whimsical idea of investing him with the scarlet with her own hand. Scrupulous persons were scandalised at the idea; but, at Rome in particular, *there are ways of coming to a compromise with heaven*. A schismatic princess invest a nuncio with the *insignia* of the cardinalate! And why not, said the subtle reasoners, who would not have been sorry to see this new honour conferred upon the Sacred College: *the cardinalate is a dignity, and not a character*.

The vanity of the college was, however, deprived of this little triumph; Archetti, on his return to Warsaw, receiving the hat with the usual formalities. Catherine had manifested, in the promotion of cardinal Archetti, that perseverance which she employed in all her enterprizes. She spared nothing to overcome the opposition which she dreaded on the part of the catholic crowns, and the still more formidable weakness of the sovereign pontiff. M. Markow was beginning to acquire the favour of the empress, and did not avail himself of it in the most modest manner. She sent him on a mission to the pope. When Pius VI. heard of that negociator's arrival in Italy, he felt an emotion of alarm, expecting from Catherine II. nothing but extravagant demands. Was she preparing for him some new embarrassment? He already feared lest, to fill up the measure of his humiliation, the Russian envoy should be charged to solicit a cardinal's hat for the new archbishop of Mohilow. He was deceived. The object of Markow's mission was merely to urge the promotion of Archetti to the cardinalate. As soon as it was determined upon, prince Yafoupoff was sent to



to Rome to thank the pope. He staid there several months on another account. He was extremely desirous of executing a project conceived long before ; a project of which the execution would have flattered the pride of Catherine, and have gratified the vanity of Pius VI. still more than his piety : this was the union of the Greek and Latin churches, to which there seemed no great objection, but the low passions often triumph over interests of the highest importance ; and the attempt failed, like all those that had preceded it.

The disputes of Catherine II. with the sovereign pontiff had, at least, restored a sort of existence to the Jesuits. They affected to consider the service she had rendered them as more important than it really was. Faithful to the ambitious plans which followed them beyond the tomb, these priests, who flattered the earthly powers when they could neither terrify nor subjugate them, continued during the whole course of her reign to worship her as their benefactress. In the year 1780, when she made a journey to Mohilow, and condescended to visit the college for which they were indebted to her munificence, they received her with the strongest demonstrations of gratitude. In the Latin discourse, which they addressed to her, the verses, commemorative of the asylum their society had found in her dominions, were particularly noticed :

*Tot pulsata malis, tot tempestatibus acta,  
Exspoliata bonis, et patris sedibus exsul,  
Fælix quod mediis hunc portum nacta procellis.*

In fact, the Jesuits were constantly protected in the asylum that had granted to them at Mohilow, Polockzo, &c. They lived there according to their monastic rules ; they were allowed to take novices ; their colleges were frequented by young men of the most distinguished families in Lithuania and Russia ; and nothing was wanting to their complete resurrection, the object of all their hopes and of all their intrigues, but the formal acknowledgement of Pius VI. It was in the midst of his vexatious negociation with the empress of Russia, on account of the archbishop of Mohilow, that the grand duke and grand dukes made their appearance in Italy. This afforded him a favourable opportunity of conciliating, by their means, the good-will of their mother. Such visits were always agreeable ; and this might be useful to him. He redoubled his attentions to the il-

Illustrious foreigners. Although they travelled *incognito* under the title of count and countess du Nord, he ordered the most distinguished honours to be paid them in all the cities of his dominions. They arrived at Rome on the 4th of February 1782. On the following morning, when, according to custom, he was descending from the Vatican, in order to go and pray at the feet of the image of St. Peter, they placed themselves, as if by chance, in his way; conversed with him for an hour and a half in the most affectionate manner; waited till he had finished his prayer; accosted him a second time; and were sparing of nothing that could flatter his vanity. A prince and princess, destined to fill the throne of the north, holding an amicable conference with the head of the catholic church, at nine hundred leagues distance from their native country, afforded a spectacle new to the eighteenth century. The most minute particulars of this interview are recorded in the newspapers of that time, where we shall leave them. The count and countess du Nord made a stay of only a few days at Rome; but they returned thither on the 23d of February, in their way back from Naples; and were witnesses to the pope's departure for Vienna. Before he proceeded on his journey, he indicated the presents he intended for them. Besides some valuable pieces of mosaic, and other curiosities, which pontifical munificence generally distributed to illustrious travellers, a faithful copy was delivered to them of Trajan's column in *lapis-lazuli*. The bas-reliefs of silver were sculptured with infinite art; and the pedestal contained a time-piece richly ornamented. The workmanship alone cost six thousand ducats. Such magnificence may dazzle for a moment: it may become the subject of conversation for a few days in the remote regions of the north: but thus it is that a sovereign ruins his finances, provokes the discontent of his subjects, and saps the foundation of his throne.— Catherine II. appeared grateful for the reception given to her children by the pope; but persisted nevertheless in her projects; the archbishop of Mohilow, and the Jesuits, continued to be no less openly protected; and Pius VI. failed in the attainment of his object, or at least of that which he pretended to have in view.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER V.

*Of the Jesuits, and of the venerable Labre.*

THE intrigues of the Jesuits were interwoven with the whole pontificate of Pius VI. and were re-produced in every variety of form. Strangers, as in the days of their prosperity, to all scruples, they availed themselves of every circumstance that occurred. They employed by turns ascetic books and calumnious libels; the illusions of superstition, and the light of philosophy; making every thing subservient to their purpose, from the atheist to the capuchin friar, and from the sovereign to the beggar in the streets.

The year 1783 was witness to the developement of one of their most abject, and, at the same time, most ridiculous plans.

In the course of the month of April, while Pius VI. was on a visit to the Pontine marshes, a report was suddenly spread in Rome of the death of a French beggar, who was become the object of public veneration. His body, which was exposed for three days, preserved, it was said, the flexibility of its members, without shewing the least sign of putrefaction. He had lived nine years at Rome unnoticed by every one; but no sooner had he closed his eyes, than the most edifying wonders were related of him. He had led the most pious and most exemplary life. Reduced to the lowest degree of indigence, he added voluntary sufferings to his unavoidable privations; covered with rags, he remained exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and, by way of penance, suffered the vermin to prey upon his flesh. Many persons recollected to have seen him stand motionless in the streets, and at the doors of churches, expecting, without asking, the charity of passengers. It was said, that he was accustomed to distribute the surplus of the alms he received to other paupers, and that he had predicted the moment of his death. The greatest personages in Rome, the populace, and above all the priests, hastened in crowds to his tomb where a great number of miracles were performed. The sick were carried thither: they returned healed; and these wonders, as always happens, were attested by numerous

merous and creditable witnesses. The most minute particulars of his life were collected; his portrait was engraved; and in less than twenty-four hours more than four thousand impressions were sold. While waiting for canonisation, the title of *venerable* was adjudged to him. Men of observing minds were not long before they perceived that this was a competitor, set up by the Jesuistical party, in opposition to the venerable Palafox, whose speedy canonisation the court of Spain was, at that moment, soliciting out of hatred to the Jesuits. It was the heads of that party who appeared to concern themselves the most about the beatified beggar. In the absence of the pope, the cardinal-vicar gravely countenanced the disgusting farce; and, at the end of three days exhibition, ordered the holy mendicant to be pompously interred in a vault constructed on purpose by the side of the principal altar of the church of *Madonna del Monte*. In his tomb was inclosed a brief notice of his life written in Latin, an Italian translation of which was profusely given away. In spite of the style of minute exaggeration, in which this singular piece of necrology was composed, means could not be found to render it interesting. It was confined to the few following facts.

“Benedict Joseph, son of J. B. Labre and of Anne-Barbe Granfir, was born on the 26th of March 1748, in the parish of St. Sulpice d’Anettes, in the diocese of Boulogne. After having passed his youth in the most orderly manner, under the care of an uncle, who was curate of Erin, he determined to devote himself to a life of penitence, and took the monastic habit in the convent of Sept Fonts of the Cistercian order. The austerity of this mode of life occasioned a disease, which he suffered patiently; but the physicians obliged him to lay aside the habit after a noviciate of eight months. He afterwards went on several pilgrimages, particularly to our lady of Loretto, and to the holy bodies of the apostles Peter and Paul. He then came and settled at Rome, which he never quitted, unless to go once a year to Loretto. He lived at Rome upon alms, of which he reserved but very little for himself, constantly giving the surplus to the poor. He led at the same time a very exemplary life, allowing himself only what was rigorously necessary for his food and raiment; holding all worldly things in sovereign contempt; and edifying mankind by the severe penance he imposed upon himself; by the continual prayers which

which he offered up in the churches; and by the other eminent virtues which he displayed. Although, while living thus, he appeared disgusting from the rags with which he was covered, he was, nevertheless, rendered *dear and amiable* to other men by his manners, forgetting himself and seeking only to please God. On the 16th of April 1783, after a long prayer in the church of *Madonna del Monte*, he was seized with a fainting fit, and carried to the house of a pious man, who happened to be there. His disorder growing worse, he received extreme unction, and, at an hour after midnight, departed this life. The following day his body was conveyed, with decent funeral ceremonies, at the expense of some good Christians, to the said church. The report of his death diffused itself through the city; and ere long, such an immense number of persons of all ranks hastened thither to see him, that it became necessary to call in the assistance of the military, to keep off the crowd. His body was thus exposed till the evening of Easter-day (the 20th of April), when it was attested by eye-witnesses, before a notary, that it was still *flexible, palpable, and free from putridity*. It was then put into a wooden coffin, which was sealed with the seal of the cardinal vicar, inclosed in another coffin also of wood, and deposited in a vault, constructed on purpose, on the epistle side \* of the principal altar of the said church."

This monument of superstition and hypocrisy is worthy of preservation. It is well that posterity should know with what consummate impudence the priests imposed on the credulity of the people at the end of this enlightened century, in a city abounding with illustrious personages, with travellers from every part of Europe, and with master-pieces of art. It is well that posterity should be able to appreciate those factious knaves, who, disguising their worldly ambition under the mask of fanaticism, had the effrontery to engage heaven in a contest with earth; called upon the devout to pay homage to a vile mendicant, whose only merit, according to their own confession, was the having led a useless and disgusting life; and thus exposed to ridicule that religion of which they called themselves the supporters; and paved the way for its final overthrow.

\* In Roman catholic churches, the two sides of the church are distinguished by the terms, the gospel side, and the epistle side. T.

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Instead of the hand of God, the hand of the Jesuits was plainly visible in the whole of this affair. In order that the enthusiasm inspired by the new saint might not cool, a collection was made to defray the expenses of his beatification; and this pious care was entrusted by the cardinal-vicar to several persons of distinction at Rome, notorious for their attachment to the defunct society. Care was taken to inform all the friends it had in France of the miracles performed by the holy Labre, which wanted nothing but witnesses; and of his prophecies, which were only known to his confessor, and which threatened the Holy See with great calamities, that were about to follow the suppression of the Jesuits. The bishop of Boulogne, one of their furious partisans, already announced to his flock, that they had another countryman in heaven, and recommended him to their devotion. He collected with scrupulous attention the most minute particulars of the life of the venerable Labre, both during his abode under the paternal roof, and after he quitted it. His relations, intoxicated with this unhopèd-for honour, and little inclined to wait for the happiness that would thence result to them in heaven, already thought their fortune made upon earth; and solicited pensions and benefices; while the sage cardinal de Bernis, who knew not whether to laugh or weep at all these follies, saw a new article added to his diplomatic correspondence. He advised the enthusiastic admirers of the holy man to moderate their zeal; or at least to defer the expression of it, until it should be proved that their new idol was deserving of their worship. But at Rome nothing could repress the transports of devotion. To doubt the miracles of the blessed Labre was impiety. His revered images were profusely circulated; the pencil, the *burin*, and the chisel, emulated each other in producing them; and even the scraps of his ragged apparel became an object of contention. The pope himself, at a loss how to act; dreading the reproach of favouring Jesuitical intrigues, and dreading still more the danger of opposing them openly, dared not refuse to join his pious homage to that which was lavished upon the relics of the holy mendicant; ordered the bedstead in which his disgusting limbs had been laid to be carried to the Vatican; and resolved to make it serve for the repose of his own.

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In the mean time, information continued to be collected with regard to Benedict Labre as well at Rome as out of Italy. The whole of it did not prove to his advantage. It was even to be feared lest one of his letters sent to that capital of the Christian world by the bishop of Boulogne should throw a damp upon the fervor of the devout. In that letter Labre advised his parents to read the works of a certain father Lejeune. Now father Lejeune had been a disciple of father Quesnel. This affection for the productions of a Jansenist was a bad recommendation to the Jesuits; but they had advanced too far to retire without shame. What was of all things the most important to them was to find food for superstition; and the blessed Labre answered that purpose as well as any one else.

His credit was still more hurt by a rumour, that when solicited to receive extreme unction at the hour of death, he had made answer that *it was not necessary*. But what injured it more than all was the report made of him by the vicar of his parish, who affirmed that, notwithstanding his entreaties, Labre would never consent to come to his church to receive the sacrament at Easter; and that his abstinence did not deserve to be so highly extolled, since it was well known that he often went to eat and drink at a neighbouring public-house, where nobody had been much edified by his frugality. It was also discovered, that his only confessor at Rome was the priest who declared himself the depositary of his prophecies, and who was notorious for his attachment to the Jesuits. In a short time, the latter were the only partisans he had at Rome; but that was a great deal. Their most active agent was an Ex-Jesuit of the name of *Zaccaria*, whom Pius VI. honoured with a share of his confidence. It was he who was charged to compose the life of Benedict Labre in two volumes; and to furnish a list of his pretended miracles. The pope, who never resisted with firmness the solicitations of the Jesuitical party, suffered himself to be persuaded to give a bookseller the exclusive privilege of printing the history of the *venerable's* life, and all the writings relative to his beatification. The congregation *dei Riti* was already engaged in that important task; and was anxious to abridge the customary formalities.

All these intrigues, and all these efforts, did not, however, produce the intended effect. The blessed Labre was  
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in vogue in those countries only where the Jesuits had a party. In Spain and Portugal his sanctity and his miracles were objects of derision. In France, a few prelates alone endeavoured to bring him into fashion; but in Rome, in that centre of religious mummary, he found for some time abundance of panegyrists, and even of imitators. It was by no means uncommon to meet devotees in the streets of that city begging like him; ragged, and motionless like him; and like him expecting alms from the passengers, but soliciting none.

Great pains continued to be taken to collect, upon the spot and elsewhere, every particular relative to his life. The most singular one is that to which amateurs are indebted for his much revered portrait. 'A French painter, of the name of Bley, who was at Rome in 1777, and who had it in contemplation to paint a picture of the calling of St. Peter, met at the corner of a street a young beggar, with a little red beard. He looked at him; and thought that his head might serve as a model for that of Christ. "Will you come to my lodgings, and be painted?" said he to him in Italian. The beggar refused in a surly manner, and in an accent by which the painter knew him to be a foreigner—"Are you a Frenchman?"—"Yes, sir."—"In that case, you have it in your power to render a service to one of your countrymen. I wish to introduce the head of our Saviour in a picture I am painting, and am at a loss for a model. You would answer my purpose. Pray do me the favour to follow me."—The painter's entreaties, joined to the word *countryman*, overcame the beggar's reluctance.—"With all my heart," said he, "but upon condition that you do not keep me long."—"A single morning will suffice." Upon this they walked on; and upon their arrival at the artist's the beggar became as motionless as a statue. This was a part which he had been long accustomed to play. When the sitting was over a reward was offered him; but he obstinately refused it, and retired. The painter heard no more of him.

As he was not dissatisfied with his sketch, he preserved it in a port folio, which he left at Lyons, in a journey that he made thither in 1782. During passion-week in 1783, a report was spread in Rome that a young French beggar, who enjoyed a high reputation for sanctity, was dead; that his body was exposed to public view, and attracted a prodigious



digious crowd; and that miracles were ascribed to him. The painter had not curiosity enough to go and see him. He had something else to do. After the interment of the beggar, the concourse round his tomb, and the miraculous result, were the same. One day a model \*, who was often employed by the artist, spoke to him of the dead man whom he had attentively surveyed. From the description he gave of him, the painter recollected his French acquaintance, sent to Lyons for his drawing, and ere long found his apartments crowded by the curious and the devout. All of them recognised the features of the venerable Labre. To satisfy the impatience of the public, he put his sketch into the hands of an Italian engraver, by whose means the portrait of the holy man was speedily dispersed all over the country.

This violent enthusiasm was not, however, of long duration. Before the year 1783 had elapsed, the venerable Labre was a little less spoken of; and the fame of his miracles was already upon the decline. All those ridiculous scenes which, in France, had been acted at the grave of Paris, the deacon, were rehearsed round his tomb. The lame repaired thither to seek a cure; and notwithstanding their implicit faith, and the mummeries of the priests, returned as lame as they went. No matter; his miracles were already numerous and incontestable; and what inference could be drawn from a few abortive cures. It was the fault of the sick, and not that of the physician. The congregation *dei Riti* was not the less busy in the beatification of the pious beggar; but it was a work of time. It was necessary to collect information in all the places which the candidate had inhabited. It was necessary to have the most authentic testimonies. It was necessary to observe a number of slow and minute formalities; such, in short, as made it impossible for fraud to procure, for one of the profane, the reward that was reserved for the elect alone. It was necessary above all to have money; for the church of Rome afforded nothing gratuitously. This was one of the most scandalous remains of those superstitious times, when she imposed a tribute upon every species of folly. On some future day, indeed, it will scarcely be believed that she dared to disfigure those brilliant apotheoses, which she borrowed from

\* Model is the name given at Rome to the males and females who hire themselves to such artists as wish to study the human form after the life.

the pagans, to such a degree as to put up to auction the seats she had to dispose of in the celestial court, and to knock them down, not to men known by their splendid virtues, by some great service rendered to their country, or at least by some illustrious crime, productive of a change in the condition of mankind; but most frequently to vile and indolent wretches, who ought at least to have been condemned to that obscurity to which they had devoted themselves.

The contributions, however, of credulity increased sufficiently in a few years for the congregation *dei Riti* to accelerate the first triumph of the venerable Labre. He was beatified in the course of the year 1792, when the country which had given him birth was already rescued from the clutches of superstition. Labre was then inrolled in the number of the blessed. There remained a still greater victory for him to obtain; that which was to procure him his insertion in the calendar of saints, in other words, his canonisation. But the ascent to this highest degree of celestial honours was difficult and tedious. There were a multitude of obstacles to be overcome. It was necessary that a century should elapse from the death of him for whom that signal favour was solicited; and it must be confessed, that in these latter times canonisations were become very unfrequent. None had been pronounced since the pontificate of Clement XIII. As to that of the blessed Labre, it is more than probable, that it is adjourned to an indefinite period.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Character of Pius VI.—His Taste for splendid Enterprises—His Vanity.*

IT is, above all, in the conduct of Pius VI. in regard to the Jesuits, that the principal traits of his character are perceptible. He never cordially acquiesced in their proscription. He was sensible that the Roman pontiff had lost in them the principal support of his power; but, at the same time, that their intriguing ambition might render them formidable. During the greater part of his reign they sometimes

times excited his regret, and sometimes his fears. He never dared either to protect or to persecute them openly. They were odious to the crowned heads, whose good-will it was so much his interest to conciliate. They increased the irresolution to which he was naturally inclined; and often obliged him to act with duplicity, the usual attendant upon weakness. This situation, which would have been embarrassing even to a mind far more energetic than his, gave birth to such a strange inconsistency of conduct, that those who for more than twenty years had observed him narrowly, could not, at the moment of his fall, flatter themselves that they were thoroughly acquainted with his character.

Heaven forbid, however, that we should wish to paint him in too odious colours. It would be unjust, even were he still in possession of his elevated rank. It would be base, after the catastrophe which has precipitated him from it. No; Pius VI. was neither wicked nor weak; but he had several glaring defects, which could not escape the least discerning eye; and caprices which formed a striking contrast with the majestic gravity of the part he had to play. Nobody denied him several brilliant qualities, considerable capacity, an agreeable turn of mind, manners at once noble and prepossessing, an easy and florid style of elocution, as much information as could be expected in a priest imbued with the principles of his profession, and a taste for the arts tolerably correct. Impatient, irascible, obstinate, and susceptible of prejudices, he was, however, neither obstinately rancorous, nor premeditatedly malevolent. Few instances can be quoted of his sensibility; many may be adduced of his good-nature. In less difficult circumstances, and with means proportioned to his views, he would, perhaps, have passed for a prudent sovereign. But his ruling passion was an excessive love of fame, which was the principal source of his faults and of his misfortunes. It was that love of fame, which, when not joined to a strong mind, often degenerates into puerile vanity. He would have wished to signalize his pontificate in every manner; and to associate his name with the most splendid enterprises. His vanity, which was apparent in every thing, drew upon him frequent mortifications. Descended from a family scarcely noble, he plumed himself, from the very beginning of his reign, upon his illustrious race. To the modest coat of arms of his ancestors, he added all the vain embellishments

ments of blazonry; and composed an escutcheon which afforded ample room for ridicule. It is well known that the Italian people are more apt, perhaps, than any other, to lay hold of any thing ridiculous with merciless avidity. To two winds, of which the arms of his family consisted, he added an eagle, *fleurs-de-lys*, and stars. These pompous armorial bearings were cruelly criticised in the following distich:

Redde aquilam imperio, Francorum lilia regi,  
Sidera redde polo; cætera, Brasche, tua.

“ Restore your eagle to the empire; his lilies to the king of France; and the stars to heaven: the rest, Braschi, is your own.”

His arms, and his name, were repeated a thousand times over in Rome, and in the rest of the ecclesiastical state. They are to be seen, not only upon the monuments which he erected, and upon such as he repaired, but even upon those in which he made the smallest change; and unless Rome be utterly destroyed, the name of *Pius Sextus*, thanks to his provident vanity, will descend to the latest posterity. While changing the Roman government, the French commissaries expunged it from all the profane monuments; but it still exists upon all the sacred edifices in which Pius VI. had the most remote concern. It was calculated in 1786, that this rage for availing himself of the slightest pretence for immortalizing his name had already cost the treasury two hundred thousand crowns. It was this incurable vanity, rather than his piety or taste for the arts, which suggested to him the idea of constructing a sacristy by the side of St. Peter's church. He there displayed a magnificence which may dazzle at first sight; but which cannot conceal its numerous defects from the eye of the connoisseur. Good taste may indeed apply to him the famous sentence pronounced by Apelles upon the Venus of a painter of his time; *you have made her fine, because you could not make her beautiful*. In like manner the sacristy of St. Peter's, which cost more than sixteen hundred thousand Roman crowns, is overloaded with all the most gaudy decorations which architecture, sculpture, gilding, and painting, can afford; but it only appears so much the meaner when compared with the superb edifice by the side of which it stands. It is the design of *Carlo Marchionni*, an architect of inferior talents,

and

and recalls to mind the defective school of Boromini; the style being altogether low and ignoble. Its dimensions are contrary to the rules of art; and it is full of nothing but breaks, niches, and projections. The columns and the altars are, in a manner, concealed in obscure corners; and the whole is surcharged with ornaments of the most tasteless kind.

In order to erect this monument to his glory, much rather than to that of the god whose vicar he called himself, it was necessary to pull down the temple of Venus, for which Michael Angelo had so much veneration, that he would have considered the mere idea of touching it as sacrilege.

It may be easily conceived that Pius VI. was not sparing of inscriptions in the sacristy of St. Peter's. Over the principal entrance were inscribed these words:

*Quod ut templi Vaticani ornamentum publica vota flagitabant, Pius VI., pontifex maximus, fecit perfectitque anno, &c.\**

How great must have been his mortification, when under this inscription he found the following insolent lines:

Publica! mentiris. Non publica vota fuere,  
Sed tumidi ingenii vota fuere tui.

Thou liest! the public voice was not consulted; thou followedst the dictates of thy vanity alone.

That motive actuated him in all his enterprises: before his elevation to the pontificate he had possessed the abbey of Subiaco, at the distance of twenty miles from Rome. There also he displayed, in the most expensive manner, his taste for magnificence. An abbey in which he had resided, a church in which he had celebrated the holy mysteries, could not be suffered to remain in obscurity. He spent considerable sums in embellishing Subiaco; and this is not one of the smallest reproaches that may be brought against his prodigality.

A protector of the arts, more out of ostentation than taste, he connected his name with the famous museum, which constituted one of the most beautiful and most useful ornaments of the Vatican; and the kind of glory, thence resulting to his pontificate, is not altogether usurped. That glory

\* What the *public voice* demanded for the decoration of the church of the Vatican, Pius VI., sovereign pontiff, began and completed in the year, &c.

glory had tempted him when he was as yet only treasurer of the Apostolical Chamber. The famous statue of Apollo Belvédère was, in a manner, exiled, with several others, in one of the court-yards of the Vatican. Braschi suggested to Clement XIV. the idea of forming on that spot a collection of ancient monuments; and, as treasurer, presided over the first rudiments of this establishment. When seated upon the pontifical throne, he added body and confidence to his brilliant project. He built round the court-yard of the Apollo vast apartments, which he ornamented with statues, busts, terms, and *bas-reliefs*; and gave to the rich collection a title which associated his name with that of his predecessor. He called it the *Museum-Pium-Clementinum*. That museum gradually became one of the most valuable in Europe; Pius VI. neglecting nothing to enrich it. He claimed the right of pre-emption whenever any antique was discovered; and, by thus eluding the greedy interference of the antiquaries, procured monuments of art at the first hand, and at a moderate price. There it was that his vanity provided abundantly for its own gratification. Beneath each piece of sculpture which he had acquired, these words were engraved in letters of gold: *Munificentia Pii VI. P. M.* Most of these monuments of art stood in a bad light, and could not be seen to advantage without the assistance of a torch, the wavering gleams of which added to their beauty, by giving them life (if it may so be said); the only thing in which some of them were defective. It was thus that connoisseurs went to admire the Ganymed, the Apollo Musagetes, the Torso, the Laocoon, and, above all, the famous Apollo Belvédère, which is alone worth a whole museum.

Engravings and explanations of the principal works of art, thus collected, began to be published in 1783, under the auspices of Pius VI.; who was much flattered by the compliment. Lewis Myris undertook the task; and the learned Visconti, who, in the first moment of the revolution, was elevated to the consulate of Rome, added to the plates a luminous commentary, which at once proves his taste, his sagacity, and his erudition. They were both, it must be confessed, powerfully seconded by the pope. The first six volumes of this work, in *folio*, had already appeared in 1792; and the seventh was ready when the political commotions in Italy began. All lovers of antiquity must regret

regret the suspension of this undertaking; which does double honour to the pontificate of Pius VI.

Wherever there was any thing more splendid than useful to be done, the zeal of that pontiff, and particularly his name, were sure to appear. Wishing to embellish the entrance of the Quirinal palace, where he resided during the summer season, he raised at great expense, in 1783, the obelisk which was lying upon the ground near the *Scala Santa*, and placed it between those two equestrian statues, that have given to the eminence on which the palace stands the name of *Monte Cavallo*.

Though the erection of this obelisk was in itself a thing little meritorious, adulation made it serve as a pretence for lavishing upon the holy father, in pompous inscriptions, the most ridiculously bombastic praise. But the Roman people, who were suffering a privation of the most necessary articles of life, while the treasury was exhausting itself in embellishing their city, did not partake of the enthusiasm felt by the authors of those inscriptions. A wag, who preferred food to obelisks, gave on this occasion a lesson to his holiness, by applying to him a well-known passage of the gospel. He wrote these words at the bottom of the obelisk:

*Signore, di a questa pietra che divenga pane.*

“ Lord, command that these stones be made bread.”

Pius VI. took pattern from him, whose vicar he was, and abstained from the miracle.

This rage for putting his name every where, and for suffering his *munificence* to be celebrated upon the most trifling occasions, exposed him to more than one sarcasm of a similar kind. It is well known that there was no other bread made at Rome but little round loaves, weighing a few ounces, which were called *pagnotte*, and which cost two *baiocchi*, or about two French sous a piece. The price never varied; but according as corn was more or less dear, the size of the *pagnotta* was diminished or increased. At a moment of scarcity, when the administrators of provisions had been obliged to make an extraordinary reduction in the weight of the *pagnotta*, one of those innocent mal-contents who exhale all their gall in raillery, thought proper to put an exceedingly small *pagnotta* into the hand of Pasquin, and to write under the statue those pompous words, so often repeated in Rome:—MUNIFICENTIA PII SEXTI.

Bells had a double title to his predilection. They were connected with that worship, by the pomp of which he was so much flattered : and the greater their size, the farther off did they announce the holy personage by whose orders they were set in motion. Malignity reproached him, in this particular, with more than one grave puerility. There was, in St. Peter's church at Rome, a bell which only weighed 21,244lb. He ordered it to be re-cast in the year 1783, with the addition of 400 quintals of metal. Three years afterwards he had another cast of 280 quintals, and christened it with great solemnity. Barbarous verses were afterwards engraved upon it, which attracted the admiration of the devout, and offended men of taste. It was loaded with valuable pearls, and decorated with eight dolphins, a crown, and a thousand other ornaments ; but the founder's art had failed him : the bell had no sound. The wags made themselves merry at the expense of the bell, the founder, and the godfather. They voted that this abortion should be deposited either in the *Museum-Pio-Clementinum*, or in the arsenal, after the example of the Abderitan sages, who were of an opinion somewhat similar in regard to a well, which was very skilfully constructed, and which wanted nothing but water.

In general Pius VI. was not fortunate in the enterprises suggested by his vanity. The sovereigns of Rome, from the time of the emperors down to the present day, have prided themselves upon enlarging, fortifying, and embellishing the port of Ancona. The ruins of the beautiful monument, erected there by the senate in honour of Trajan, still attests the beneficence of that emperor. In modern times Clement XII. is the pope who has paid the most attention to the embellishment of that port. A triumphal arch erected in honour of him, opposite to that of Trajan, and his statue in marble, are testimonies of the gratitude of its inhabitants. Pius VI. wished also to give a lustre to his pontificate, by making some addition to the works of his predecessors. The port of Ancona is indebted to him for several improvements ; among others, for a light-house : but he was still more anxious to have his statue erected there, than to deserve it. In 1789, while the workmen were employed in it, part of the scaffolding gave way, and killed a great number of them. This accident, joined to so many others, was considered as a bad omen ; and in fact

Pius



Pius VI. was now approaching the era of his greatest misfortunes.

But it was in the performance of his pontifical functions, above all, that his taste for ostentation was displayed; and that his vanity found frequent opportunities of gratification. It must be confessed, that, on those occasions, he was as much favoured by nature as by the pompous ceremonies of the Roman catholic church. He was in all respects one of the handsomest men of his time. To a very lofty stature he joined a noble and expressive set of features, and a florid complexion, which the hand of time itself seemed to spare. He contrived to wear his pontifical habits in such a way, that they deprived him of none of his personal advantages. In every thing he did he displayed them with a refinement of coquetry which gave great scope to ridicule. When elevated to the papacy, he had, in conformity with a custom that had grown into a law, laid aside the peruke, which he wore while cardinal. His forehead was entirely bald; but there remained behind, and on each side of his head, a ring of hair of the most brilliant white, which gave him a look at once noble and venerable. He had also one of the handsomest legs in Italy; and was not a little vain of it. Not wishing that his long pontifical robes should entirely conceal that part of his person, to the adorning of which he was always scrupulously attentive, he took great care to hold them up on one side, so that one of his legs was entirely exposed to view. This affected display of his hair and legs, so unworthy of a grave pontiff, gave occasion to the following distich, which, though bad enough in itself, serves, however, as a proof that no opportunity was lost of turning him into ridicule:

*Aspice, Roma, Pium. Pius! baud est; aspice minus—  
Luxuriante comâ, luxuriante pede.*

“Rome, look at Pius. He Pius! no indeed:

“He is a comedian. Behold the display of his hair;

“And see how vain he is of his leg.”

Nothing, indeed, was more striking than to see him, on days of great parade, crowned with the triple diadem, arrayed in robes of the most dazzling white, which contrasted with the splendor of the Roman purple, soaring in a manner over a crowd of ecclesiastics of every rank, and seeming thereby to announce his sway over the universal church.

church. On these solemn occasions all the members of the clergy came and adored him repeatedly ; and each class in a different way. The cardinals were not permitted to kiss his hand till they had bowed down before his throne. The prelates and heads of orders bowed still more humbly, and only rose as high as his knees ; while the inferior clergy remained at his feet. The allegory of the statuary, prostrate before the work of his own hands, was never better applied than to this stupid veneration, particularly of the cardinals for the sovereign pontiff—the creature of their intrigues and of their caprices ; in which not one of them, perhaps, seriously thought that he saw the work of the Holy Ghost.

It is needless to say with what an eye of pity philosophy looks down upon this humiliating homage, paid by a multitude of reasonable beings to one of their fellow-creatures. Many spectators, however,—many even of those who were the most strongly guarded against all these vain illusions, could not help feeling a strong emotion at the sight of the pomp that surrounded St. Peter's chair, especially while it was occupied by Pius VI. The greatest magnificence accompanied him whenever he went out. A carriage, at the back of which he was seated alone in an arm chair richly ornamented, moved forward, escorted by servants on horseback, and in long clothes, driven by a coachman and postillions, with their heads uncovered, rolling along majestically slow between two rows of foot soldiers, and followed by detachments of light horse and cuirassiers. It was impossible for any thing to be more striking.

But when he officiated in the grand ceremonies of the church, it was difficult even for heretics, for free-thinkers even, to avoid feeling a sort of religious enthusiasm. An Englishman (John Moore), after having described one of these sights, whither he had carried nothing but a very profane spirit of curiosity ; but where he had admired the dignity and grace with which Pius VI. performed his part, cannot help adding : “ No ceremony can be better calculated for striking the senses, and imposing on the understanding, than this of the supreme pontiff giving the blessing from the balcony of St. Peter's. For my own part, if I had not, in my early youth, received impressions highly unfavourable to the chief actor in this magnificent interlude, I should have been in danger of paying him a degree of respect very inconsistent with the religion

"ligion in which I was educated." Let us hear the description given of one of these ceremonies by another eyewitness, whose testimony certainly is not suspicious. It is that of a protestant, and of a protestant philosopher.

"The solemnities of the day of the Ascension consist in the solemn adoration of the pope by the Sacred College, and in the public benediction he bestows. It is on this occasion that Pius VI. displays all the graces of his person; that he renders almost supportable the disgusting ceremony of kissing his hands and feet; and that he distributes benedictions with unparalleled dignity. With his body leaning a little forward, as if desirous of raising up the person who is about to kneel down before him, he presents to the cardinal, who is approaching, his hand to kiss, and while a prelate, standing by his side, gently lifts up his robe, and discovers an elegantly shaped leg, he holds out his foot ready to receive its share of the homage.

"The cardinal, on his knees, kisses the foot of the pontiff, who gives him his benediction, and while he is rising, the kiss of peace upon the forehead.—When the ceremony was over, Pius VI., arrayed in his pontifical habits, seated himself in the arm-chair prepared for him, and was carried with great pomp to the *loggia*, a kind of tribune over the entrance of St. Peter's church. At the moment when the inner curtain of that tribune was drawn back, the seat on which the pope was sitting was brought forward to the balustrade, a salute of artillery was heard from the castle of St. Angelo, and all the bells of Rome were set a ringing together. At the same instant the square before the church, in which the pope's guards were drawn up, resounded with martial music; while the acclamations of a prodigious number of spectators, intoxicated with enthusiasm, confounded themselves with the rattling of the kettle drums and the shrill tones of the trumpets. A perfect calm succeeded this universal commotion, this stunning mixture of shouts and musical sounds. The pope then rose from his seat, and instantly the whole of the immense crowd fell on their knees before him. He lifted up his eyes, extended his arms towards heaven, drew them slowly back across his breast, spread them again as if to pour down upon Rome and the universe the blessings he had just obtained from heaven, and disappeared from the tribune."

Let

Let us also listen to the description that the same observer has given of the no less striking part which the pope played in the procession of Corpus Christi. It will besides furnish us *en passant* with a few traits of the disposition of that nation, which we imagined to be ripe for liberty.

“ After that crowd of religious corporations, of which the population of Rome was principally composed, had been seen to file off for two whole hours in the greatest order, all on a sudden the ear was struck by the ringing of bells, and by the report of the cannon of the castle of St. Angelo. This was to announce the appearance of the sovereign pontiff: who was brought in state out of the great door of St. Peter’s church. It is equally impossible for the pen to describe the truly picturesque beauty of this group, and the profound impression it made upon the most indifferent spectators. Sitting upon a kind of litter, covered with cloth of gold, the venerable old man, whose fine figure age had respected, was borne aloft upon the shoulders of his guards; and thus moved on under a magnificent canopy, supported by the most distinguished personages of his court. The steps of the bearers were slow, and so measured, that the pontiff seemed to hover in the air over the heads of all around him. He was afterwards seen to lean forward, in order to reach the altar on which the consecrated wafer was exposed in an *ostensoir* \* enriched with diamonds. Although the pope was really sitting, yet, as in that position, he was entirely surrounded by an immense robe of white satin, embroidered with crowns of gold, which hung down in waving folds as low as the shoulders of his bearers, and entirely covered his seat, and the altar itself, he seemed to be on his knees before the holy sacrament. Of all his person nothing was visible, but his hands joined together and laid upon the altar, and his bare head adorned with his white hair. In that attitude, he prayed in a low voice, while his eyes, lifted up towards heaven, were moistened with the tears of compunction; and every feature expressed the most fervent devotion. Is it astonishing, that a scene so well contrived, and disposed with so much art in every particular, should produce upon the multitude the expected effect? It was so general, and so strongly marked, that it was impossible to avoid being deeply affected. From the very moment,

\* The box in which the Roman catholic priests expose the host to the view of the public,

when

when the discharge of artillery and the ringing of bells first announced the approach of the pope, and when the pyramidal group was seen coming forward, and passing through the gates of the church, the people had fallen prostrate upon the ground, as if struck by lightning; then, beating their bosoms, had lifted up their eyes full of respect and religious awe towards the pope, who was approaching the holy sacrament; and, as if a divinity had appeared to them, followed him with looks of admiration, until he had entirely vanished from their sight. Several princes, and the pope's generals, clad in cuirasses of polished steel, walked in his retinue. A great number of his life-guards, the Swiss in his pay, and his guards, both horse and foot, composed the solemn procession, which took up near five hours in passing through the colonnades, and three of the neighbouring streets. The pope afterwards ascended the principal altar of St. Peter's church, and gave his apostolical benediction to the people who crowded round him: that same people, so pious and devout, then retired to pass the rest of the day in the most licentious orgies, which frequently ended in stabbing and assassination. So slight is the impression really made upon them, though apparently so strong. The art of the priests has invented this magic picture, in order to keep the people for some hours in a state of religious stupefaction; but what have they done for their improvement? Their end is to dazzle and to subjugate them; but not to reform their manners."

To the reflections of the philosopher, we will only add, that the Roman nation, so devout and so depraved, continued, till the overthrow of the papal throne, to pay to him who occupied it, this idolatrous homage, the evident mark of their servile attachment; but at the same time, while they adored the pontiff, they often cursed the sovereign. Pius VI. like him whose vicar he called himself, was endowed with a two-fold nature. Clad in his pontifical habits, surrounded by the pomp of religious ceremonies, and employed in the distribution of celestial treasures, Pius VI. appeared to the Romans to be a god. On his return to the Vatican, he was no more in their eyes, particularly during the last years of his pontificate, than a man exposed to their murmurs, and to their sarcasms. This double sovereignty was so far singular, that the sceptre considered itself as inviolable under shelter of the tiara; that the devotion of the subjects

subjects seemed to insure their obedience ; and that the benedictions, the indulgences, and all the celestial favours, of which the monarchical demi-god had undertaken to be the distributor, had at once for object and result to sanctify, to overawe, and to disarm them. Accordingly nothing less than the violent hurricane of the French revolution was necessary to tear up by the roots that gigantic tree,

De qui la tête au ciel étoit voisine,  
Et dont les pieds touchoient à l'empire des morts †.

It remains to be observed, that all those pompous mummeries, of which we have just given a few specimens, had long been an appendage of the pontifical throne ; but no pope had combined, in the same degree as Pius VI., every thing necessary to insure their effect. His predecessor, much more meritorious than he in a variety of respects, was humane, affable, and generous. He possessed all the domestic virtues ; but he retained under the tiara all the modesty of his former situation in life ; and felt a sort of philosophical disdain for ostentation. The principal persons about him, sensible how much the parade of ceremonies added to the temporal power of the Roman catholic church and increased the illusion of which it stands so much in need, were vexed at Ganganelli's neglecting, with a sort of affectation, that external dignity which imposes so much upon the vulgar. The sacred charm was about to vanish. The pontiff seemed desirous of distinguishing himself only by his simplicity. Braschi, on the contrary, possessed in his manners, in his taste, and in his exterior, every thing that was capable of impressing mankind with respect. The striking contrast that existed, in that particular, between him and his predecessor, gave rise to a belief that the cardinals, in electing Pius VI. had been actuated above all by the hope that the chair of St. Peter, debased by Ganganelli, would rise again, and shine with renovated splendor. An English traveller observed, that in this they imitated the Roman senate, which sometimes chose a dictator in order to restore the ancient discipline.

The hope of the cardinals was not deceived, at least in that respect. No pope ever displayed more pomp than Pius VI. in the performance of his functions ; nor was the prevailing

† Of which the head approached the skies, and the feet reached down to the mansions of the dead.

vailing taste of any of his predecessors ever more favoured by circumstances. The rage for visiting Italy was become general; and had reached every country and every rank. Pius VI. had the good fortune, so dear to his vanity, of reviewing a whole crowd of great personages, including most of the princes of Europe, of receiving their homage, and of doing the honours of his court and church in the presence of the most illustrious visitors.

The epoch at which he was elected procured him, during the very first year of his pontificate, one of those occasions of unfrequent occurrence, on which the Roman church displays the greatest pomp, and is most lavish of spiritual treasures; we mean the jubilee, which was a real *bonne fortune* to Pius VI. It will soon be forgotten in France; but, perhaps, it is yet remembered, that there were jubilees of two kinds; the one which recurred periodically was properly called the *Holy Year*; the other was the *Jubilee of Exaltation*, and was celebrated at the accession of a new pope to the pontifical throne. The first, as being the most uncommon, was beyond comparison the most solemn.

It was first established in 1300 by Boniface VIII. who, wishing to sanctify the profane institution of the secular games of ancient Rome, conceived the idea of indicating the first year of each century as that in which heaven, more particularly propitious, would in future shower down upon the faithful a larger portion of those blessings, of which the popes called themselves the dispensers. Clement VI. was of opinion, that these periods, so favourable to the faithful, and so glorious to the Holy See, were too distant; and ordered that they should recur every fifty years. The second jubilee was therefore celebrated in 1350. Sextus V. improved still farther upon the liberality of his predecessors; and ordained that the jubilee should take place every five and twenty years, which has been the practice ever since.

Clement XIV. already attacked by the lingering disease of which he died, had in the month of April, as we have already said, announced the opening of the holy year, in full consistory. It was reserved for another to celebrate it. Pius VI. had *that happiness* in the following year; and, but for the catastrophe which precipitated him from his throne, would probably have enjoyed it a second time.

The jubilee of 1775, in all probability the last, was celebrated with a degree of magnificence, surpassing that of all

all the preceding ones. It was on this occasion, that Pius VI. gave the first proof of his taste for pompous ceremonies. One of the principal circumstances of the festival, that indeed which may be called the first act of it, is the opening of the famous *porta santa*, or sacred door. This door, which is one of those of St. Peter's church, remained constantly shut except during the holy year. It was then opened with a parade of which Pius VI. took care not to diminish the effect. It was his office to preside over the demolition of a brick wall, that closed the entrance of the sacred door. Advancing with majestic gravity, he struck the first stroke, and instantly the wall fell to the ground under the redoubled blows of the workmen, to whom the signal had been given. The pious spectators eagerly seized upon the materials; each stone being an object of high veneration. By their contact with that which was laid four-and-twenty years before by the sacred hands of the sovereign pontiff, they had acquired the virtue of curing all sorts of diseases. According to custom, the *porta santa* remained open during all the holy year, and was the scene of the most ridiculous mummery. The pope himself did not pass through it without exhibiting marks of the most profound respect; while the pilgrims, disdaining the numerous passages which lead into the church of St. Peter, entered it only by crawling under the sacred door upon their hands and knees. It was shut with great solemnity at the end of the year. The pope approached, sitting upon a kind of throne, and surrounded by the cardinals; and an anthem was sung, accompanied by loud music: it was the lyre of Amphion about to rebuild the walls of Thebes. The pontiff then descended with a gold trowel in his hand; laid the first stone of the wall which was to last twenty-five years; put a little mortar upon it; and reascended his throne. Real masons took his place, and completed the blocking up of the sacred door, the ceremony closing with a solemn mass. Thus did the Roman catholics lavish the august mysteries of their religion, sometimes upon the baptism of a bell, and sometimes upon the rebuilding of a wall.

The following day the festival was continued, Pius VI. displaying in it all his great talents for acting, which were hitherto but little known. He was already near sixty years of age; but his complexion still retained somewhat of the brilliant colouring of youth. The Romans, accustomed to  
see



see their pontiffs bending under the weight of years, and labouring in the performance of their public functions, which were often long and fatiguing, admired the address and grace with which the new pope acquitted himself of his task. The church seemed to grow young again, and to have a right, as well as Pius VI., to expect prosperous days.

It was shortly afterwards that the beauty of his person received an homage, to which the vicars of Jesus Christ were not accustomed. While Pius VI. was passing through a street of Rome, carried along with a splendor suitable to his dignity, a voice was heard from one of the windows, which were crowded with curious spectators. It was that of a young woman : *quanto è bello ! quanto è bello !* cried she, in a moment of enthusiasm. An old woman, in haste to correct any thing that might appear too profane in this exclamation, replied, with her hands joined, and her eyes lifted up towards heaven, *Tanto è bello quanto è santo !* It is said, that such a compliment gave Pius VI. more secret satisfaction than all the incense lavished upon him by the prelates at the altar, and all the genuflexions of the Sacred College.

We do not mean, however, that an inclination, common to many of the cardinals, was ever included in the charges brought against him during the course of his long pontificate. His very enemies, if not altogether unjust, must confess that he has always been irreproachable as to purity of morals. In the early days which he passed at Rome, ambition made him seek the society of a lady of high rank, and of a very intriguing disposition, who was supposed to possess considerable influence. This was madame Falconieri, mother of the young lady, afterwards duchess of Braschi. He was indebted to her for his first success in his ecclesiastical career. But madame Falconieri, though worthy of attention as a patroness, had nothing that could make her desirable as a mistress. Braschi visited her for a short time, kept away as soon as he had obtained the only favour he expected from her ; and was solely indebted for the reputation, which he acquired in these latter times, of being mademoiselle Falconieri's father, to the ill-humour of his subjects, and to his blind partiality for her after she became his niece.

During the time that he was treasurer of the Apostolical Chamber, that is to say, from 1766 to 1773, he was remarkable for his constant application to business, for his contempt of worldly pleasures, and for the regularity of his

his conduct ; which procured him general esteem. He did not forfeit this character during his cardinalate, which lasted only two years ; and when he was seated in St. Peter's chair, excepting indeed the duplicity of which he was suspected, and which the embarrassment of circumstances seemed to render excusable, he was free from all serious reproach. Since his elevation to the papacy, his defects, which he had either concealed, or had had no opportunity of developing, have excited a great deal of hatred ; but calumny, which has not spared him, has scarcely ever attacked him upon the score of his morals. Gorani is, perhaps, the only one who treats him as ill in that respect as in every other. He throws suspicions upon the motives of the affection which cardinal Ruffo manifested for him in his youth ; he pretends that it was not ambition alone which led to his connexion with madame Falconieri ; and he even insinuates, that gallantry was one of the principal means of his elevation to the papal throne. It is in fact of no great consequence whether these charges be founded or not. The salvation of Pius VI. may be much concerned ; but his glory is very little interested in his having faithfully practised one of the first Christian virtues. It is a duty, however, that we owe to truth, to affirm, that those who have known him long, and well, never perceived any thing that could give rise to the smallest doubt as to the purity of his morals, at least from the time in which he was appointed treasurer, to the end of his pontificate. If the amorous connexions of a temporal sovereign cannot escape the vigilance of his numerous attendants, how can a pope, all whose steps and moments are counted, conceal himself from the nice observation of the conscientious, or from the keen eye of malignity ; and cover his secret intrigues with an impenetrable veil ? Pius VI. divided all his time between his religious duties, his closet, and the library of the Vatican. He went out very seldom, and never without company. He had no taste for a country residence, nor even for those innocent amusements which the gravest men allow themselves as a relaxation after their labours. He passed the summer season at the Quirinal palace, and the rest of the year at the Vatican. His only recreation was the visit which he paid almost every year to the Pontine marshes. Constantly taken up with serious occupations, or the duties of his office, he avoided, instead of seeking, the society of women.

As

As pope, he could not then lead a more exemplary life; but as a man, and as a sovereign, he no doubt exposed himself to many and serious reproaches. An erroneous opinion had been formed of him in many respects. When rendered more conspicuous by his eminent station, he soon discovered a great ignorance of worldly affairs, particularly of politics; an obstinacy which never yielded to a direct attack; and an invincible attachment to certain prejudices, inseparable perhaps from his profession, but of which he neither suspected the inconvenience nor the danger. This we shall have frequent opportunities of observing in the course of these Memoirs. He entertained the most favourable idea of his own capacity. Rather headstrong than firm, he was constantly undoing what he had done; and this mixture of vanity and weakness was attended with two serious inconveniences. What was no more than inconsistency, and want of resolution, was taken for duplicity. Coldly affable he never felt a real affection for any one; nor ever knew what it was completely to unboosom himself, unless when fear rendered him communicative.

Out of the five cardinals, who were successively his secretaries of state, there was not one who could flatter himself with having enjoyed his entire confidence. He granted it, but still under certain restrictions, to Gerdyl and Antonelli, two other cardinals; consulting them solely about matters in which he thought he could derive advantage from their talents.

Hasty, impetuous, and sometimes even passionate, he required to be curbed by fear, or soothed by affectionate language, which indicated an attachment to his interest, without hurting his pride. Cardinal de Bernis said of him, towards the end of the year 1777, *I watch over him incessantly, as over a child of an excellent disposition; but too full of spirits, and capable of throwing itself out of the window if left a moment alone.*

*That excellent disposition* was afterwards in great measure spoiled by adulation, the possession of power, and the want of somebody bold enough to tell him the truth, or inclined to take the trouble. Faults gradually manifested themselves, that the most clear-sighted had not even suspected. His long pontificate was, besides, a grievance which neither the cardinals nor the people of Rome could pardon him. In short a concurrence of unlucky circumstances, to which he knew  
not

not how to accommodate himself, added to his improvidence and to his vanity, the principal source of his prodigality, and of his taste for brilliant, but expensive enterprises, rendered him in the end more odious than many princes who have been really wicked. One of his operations alone will find favour with posterity, and even immortalise his name, although infected with that principal fault which manifested itself in every thing, and which was not one of the smallest causes of his sorrows : this is the draining, which he at least began, of the Pontine marshes.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The draining of the Pontine Marshes.*

OF all the enterprises of Pius VI., that to which he constantly attached the highest importance, and which will throw a lustre upon his pontificate, even in the eyes of the severest judges, is the draining of the Pontine marshes. It alternately procured his vanity gratifications and disappointments ; and was the theme of pompous panegyrics and bitter sarcasms. It is connected with the prosperity and salubrity of Italy. The expenses attendant on it occasioned the exhaustion of the papal treasury, and the murmurs of the Roman people ; and thus paved the way for a revolution. It therefore deserves some mention\*.

The Appian way, *Via Appia*, famous in history on account of the era of its construction, and the name of its founder, and rendered still more illustrious by so many triumphal processions ; that road, of which the ruins, surviving the ravages of time, would alone suffice to give an idea

\* We have borrowed the greatest part of these details from a work upon Italy, published in German, by Doctor Meyer, a Hamburger, equally respectable for his talents and virtues. This work appeared at Berlin in 1792, under the title of *Darstellungen aus Italien*.

idea of the Romans and of their public works, passed through the country which has since been called the Pontine marshes. The origin of their existence is lost in oblivion. Two rivers, the *Amasenus* and the *Ufens*, which have preserved their ancient names to the present day, appear to have been, by their overflowing, the first cause of the desolation to which this country has been condemned, whenever the carelessness of the government has ceased to call the guardian hand of industry to its assistance. From that part of the Apennines which borders upon the ancient Campania, and at the foot of which is a large valley extending to the sea, run a great number of streams, large and small, that find inexhaustible sources in the summits and sides of that chain of mountains. Their union forms several rivers, the beds of which being constantly filled up by the mud that the water brings down with it, cannot contain the abundant tribute they receive, especially in the rainy season. They then swell, overflow, and cover the plain, which is on a level with their banks. Some of these torrents run off into the lowest parts of the valley, and there form immense ponds, abounding with fish.

Such is the permanent cause of the tendency of this country to degenerate into a morass; such are the obstacles which the Romans, during the splendid period of the republic, had constantly to overcome, and over which they constantly triumphed.

A colony of Spartans, disgusted with the severity of the laws of Lycurgus, quitted Lacedæmon, and, after a long and dangerous navigation, landed upon this coast. Finding it a fertile country, they settled there, and, according to the custom of those superstitious times, dedicated a temple, a sacred wood, and several fountains, to an unknown goddess, whom they were pleased to call *Feronia*; and whose worship and altars have been immortalised in the verses of Horace†.

By the care of this industrious colony, the country which they had peaceably conquered was rapidly peopled, and attained a high degree of cultivation. It is the country of the Volscei, who made so great a figure during the robust infancy of the Roman republic; and it was for a long time

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† Ora manusque tuâ lavimus, FERONIA, lymphâ.

Læb. l. Sat. V.

one of its principal granaries. But towards the time when Rome was in its greatest splendour, this district, desolated by inundations, was indiscriminately denominated the Pontine country, and the Pontine marshes (*ager Pontinus, palus Pontinus*); the three and twenty cities, which formerly embellished its surface, no longer existing but in the remembrance of the Romans. The principal families of Rome, however, established in such cantons, as the elevation of the ground, and the efforts of industry, preserved from the ravages of the stagnant water, those country-seats, the beauty and fertility of which were celebrated by the Roman poets.

About three centuries before the Christian era, Appius Claudius, the censor, surnamed the Blind, stood forward as the first restorer of this country. He carried across the morasses the road which bears his name, and of which the magnificence was never equalled. Among other monuments, it offered to the eye those tombs which suggested to the mind of the pensive traveller this philosophical thought. *Those who repose here once lived, and, like thee, were mortal.*

It was not, however, till a century and a half after the making of the Appian way, that Cornelius Cethegus, the consul, undertook to drain the Pontine marshes. Transient and impotent efforts! Julius Cæsar found this country a prey to new desolation. Covetous of every kind of glory, he was about to restore it to fertility; when a premature death prevented him from executing the arduous task.

Augustus undertook it. It was he who cut, along the Appian way, a canal which was destined to receive the stagnant water, and to afford it an outlet; and which served also for the purposes of navigation, and for the conveyance of travellers †. This was the canal on which Horace embarked with Mecænas, on his way from Rome to Brundisium; and of which he seasons his description with the salt of his satirical humour.

Trajan appeared next in the list of the improvers of this fatal country; but he confined himself to the reparation and embellishment of the Appian way, and to the making of another road which bears his name. ‡

Near

† See the map annexed to this volume.

‡ See the map.

Near three centuries afterwards, during the memorable reign of Theodoric I., king of the Goths in Italy, the Pontine marshes re-appeared in all their horror. Let us listen to that prince himself, while describing them to the Roman senate, through the medium of the illustrious Cassiodorus, his minister, in the poetical stile of those barbarous times—"Those morasses," says he, "of which the inimical fury lays waste the neighbouring country; over which the irresistible violence of the water extends itself like a sea; and, invading the country far and near, desolates with its dreadful inundations the most delightful plains; deforms their beauteous face by converting them into deserts; and disgraces a soil, which, being stripped of its fruits by the floods, no longer affords any useful production, since it is left a prey to the ravages of the stagnant water. Let us admire"; adds he, "the enterprising boldness of past times revived in one of our contemporaries, who has just attempted alone what the united powers of the state did not dare to undertake." He meant a rich patrician of the name of *Decius*, who was in fact invested with the sole charge of draining these marshes, and to whom Theodoric abandoned the property of the plains he was about to render fertile, "because," said he, "it is just that every one should enjoy the fruit of his labours." An inscription found near Terracina proves that the efforts of Decius were crowned with some success.

But after him, time, powerfully seconded by the ravages of war, and by the neglect of the ruling powers, resumed its rights over a country, devoted by turns to the charms of a luxuriant cultivation, and to the devastation occasioned by the merciless floods. The popes, who first established their temporal authority in the Roman state, had neither sufficient activity, knowledge, nor treasure; three things of which the union alone can give birth to the miracles of industry. Several sovereign pontiffs, however, endeavoured to signalize their reign by bold attempts. Boniface VIII., Martin V., Leo X., and particularly Sixtus V., whose energetic character reminds us, in many respects, of the splendid days of Rome, were ambitious of this kind of glory, and not without success. The traces of two canals are still to be seen, which might have been restored at a small expense to their ancient destination; and of which the names (*Rio Martino* and *Fiume Sisto*) denote the pontiffs by whom they were cut.

Their indolent successors suffered these noble works to go to ruin. From time to time some of them were tempted to resume them; but of what use are transient whims in enterprises which require a strong and constant volition? Projects were formed; maps were drawn; and the advice was taken of Dutch engineers, as the most skilful in Europe in works of the kind. In these latter times, some Italians also presented plans for draining land, which were slightly investigated, and then laid upon the shelf. In the mean time the cause of the ravages kept operating slowly, but without interruption; and when Pius VI. succeeded to the papal throne, the Pontine marshes, after two centuries of neglect, were in the most horrible state. To restore to cultivation and salubrity the vast extent of ground which they covered, was an enterprise that might have dismayed a man of common intrepidity; but his courage was supported by the idea of the glory about to be attached to his name; or rather it was nothing but that same love of extraordinary things, in which the little good he has done, and all the errors he is expiating, originated. Immediately after his accession, he went to visit that desolate country. He shuddered, when, from the top of a hill which commands a view of it, he saw at his feet the deep ravages of time, and of the inundations, the pestiferous fogs, which extended far and wide, and the dangers which even threatened his sacred person, should he dare to tread the unsolid ground. He conceived from that moment the project of beginning by making a safe road, and building great bridges over the abyss, in order to secure to himself the means of crossing it at least without danger. He next turned his attention to the great operation of draining. It is at the port of Astura, where Cicero was decapitated, and where the unfortunate Conradin fell, thirteen centuries after, into the hands of his cruel conqueror, that these marshes begin. They extend along the coast as far as Terracina, upon the confines of the kingdom of Naples; and in some places advance a great way into the interior of the country. They would long ago have poisoned the air of Rome, if the pestilential vapours they exhale had not been stopped by the forests which shelter the cities of Cisterna and Sermonnetta.

At the beginning of a reign, the attention of every one is awake, and every hope is alive; a prospect opens which admits the indulgence of distant speculations; and vanity, ambition,



ambition, and adulation, are eager to second the views of the sovereign. Those of Pius VI. were forwarded by his new subjects. He established a bank, under the name of *Monte dei Marecchi*, to receive the funds destined for this enterprise; and in a little time the voluntary subscriptions carried thither amounted to 120,000 Roman crowns. Bolognini, one of those whose plans had been presented under the pontificate of Clement XIII., was immediately put at the head of the undertaking; and in 1777, Sani, an able surveyor, was charged to draw a plan of the ground, and to indicate the spots, in which the works might be begun with the greatest probability of success.

The first thing discovered under the mud was an ancient aqueduct, which formerly supplied the city of Terracina with water; and which was repaired at little expense. The famous Appian way was next cleared of the strata of earth under which it lay buried; and that master-piece of Roman magnificence, paved entirely with blocks of lava, and leading across the whole country, which separates Rome from Capua, was restored to the light of day, and to the traveler; but not without considerable pains and expense. Appian Claudius, better versed in hydraulics than his successors, was sensible that a road carried through the midst of stagnant water ought not much to exceed their ordinary level. No doubt, at the time of great inundations, the Appian way, thus constructed, was momentarily overflowed; but its small degree of elevation served at least to favour the running off of the water towards the sea. Those who came after him remedied an inconvenience which lasted only a few hours, and, by heightening the surface of the road, rendered it more constantly passable; but they created a much more serious inconvenience. The road thus raised five or six feet by Trajan, and several feet more by king Theodoric, four centuries afterwards, was intersected at certain intervals by arches, under which the water that came from the Apennines found a passage to the sea. Those arches being choked up, from want of proper care, the water, which at the time of the inundations used to pass so freely over the old road, found itself confined by the kind of dyke that improvidence had raised; remained stagnant; diffused itself; and rose to a higher level; and thus the mischief, meant to be remedied, only grew worse and worse. It was at its height when Pius VI. undertook to attack it

at its source. The successive *strata* of stones, which had been laid upon the work of the ancient Romans, were first demolished by dint of labour; the dates of their construction, and the names of their authors, appearing by inscriptions, which both time and the water had spared. At length the old Appian way was discovered. It was found to be still furrowed with deep ruts, made by the carriages of the Romans in the time of the republic, and perhaps also by their triumphal cars; sacred traces, which awakened the most sublime recollections. It was on this revered foundation that Pius VI. made the new road, which was carried as far as Terracina, the last town of his dominions towards the south, and which the court of Naples continued to the celebrated city of Capua. In 1786 this noble road was completely finished, was open for passengers, and constituted one of the principal embellishments of modern Italy.

While this magnificent work was in hand, orders were given to cut through the morasses a wide canal, which was to terminate in the lake of Fogliano; a lake separated from the coast by a narrow tongue of land. Thousands of hands were employed in these labours, and not without success. As early as the month of October 1778, a piece of land, of eighty *rubbie*, was recovered from the stagnant water; and in the following year was fit for cultivation.

The first enthusiasm of the Romans, however, had subsided, and began in that very year to give place to murmurs. The voluntary subscriptions falling far short of the expense, the undertaking could not be carried on without burdensome loans; and did not appear to be attended with the success answerable to such ruinous efforts. It was decryed. The ill-humour that the pope thence conceived served only to confirm him in his projects; and sometimes gave occasion to scenes characteristic of his irascible, but just and benevolent disposition. In the course of the above year a priest of Terracina, a good ecclesiastic, but a bad courtier, repaired to Rome to solicit a prebend. He had just passed through a country which occupied the pontiff's attention, and could give him certain and recent information on the subject. In answer to the questions of his holiness, he bluntly told him that the draining made no progress, and that the sums expended upon it were so much *money thrown away*. "*Money thrown away!*" replied the pope, in a rage. "You

"You are an insolent fellow: what, do you come to brave me in my very palace?" This was a clap of thunder to the poor priest. He fainted away; was carried to his apartments; and, when he recovered his senses, thought that he had nothing better to do than to return with all speed to Terracina. His despair was great: instead of his prebend, he had nothing to carry back but the malediction of the holy father. But what was his astonishment, when on a sudden he saw the pope's chamberlain enter, and deliver to him not only the grant of the prebend, but also an order to wait upon his holiness without delay. This second interview was less stormy than the former; and was no doubt more useful to the pope. He derived information from it by which he profited.

But what can human perseverance effect, when opposed by the caprices of the elements? Towards the end of 1779, a dreadful inundation destroyed all the works; swallowed up the enormous sums they had already cost; and justified the unfavourable prediction of the priest of Terracina. Nobody knew how to communicate to the pope this fatal intelligence. It reached him disguised, and weakened; but it was still sufficiently alarming to inspire him with a desire of repairing to the spot in order to estimate the mischief, and to prescribe a remedy.

It was a thing extremely uncommon to see a pope absent himself from his see. From Benedict XIII, who, in 1727, went as far as Benevento, no pontiff had been known to make a longer excursion than to Castel-Gondolfo, which is only at a few miles distance from Rome. Pius VI. was scarcely recovered from a very serious fit of illness. His physicians, his darling nephew, count Onesti, and his courtiers particularly, endeavoured to dissuade him from the execution of his project: but he persisted in it, and set off, on the 5th of April 1780, with a very small retinue. This proof of his taste for simplicity, and of his aversion for useless luxury, instead of procuring him the praise he was entitled to, served only to render him the object of sarcasms. His economy was construed into meanness; his abstinence from pomp into a want of dignity. The sovereign pontiff, the vicar of Jesus Christ, was, as one of our modern poets say, *condemned to magnificence*. What unaccountable injustice! We first deify men, and then impute it to them as a crime, if, when surrounded with pageantry and adulation, they

they consider themselves as demi-gods at least. But let us follow Pius VI. in his journey.

He would not allow the cardinal de Bernis to accompany him, even to his bishopric of Albano, ten miles distant from Rome. His obsequious eminence obeyed; but as he had already discovered the taste which the pope endeavoured to conceal under the veil of modesty, Pius VI. found, on his arrival at Albano, inscriptions with which he permitted his vanity to be flattered. At Veletri, where he slept the first night, cardinal Albani, dean of the Sacred college, besides the incense of inscriptions, lavished on him another kind of homage, to which he was far from being insensible. It consisted of some effects of great value, that had just descended to him by inheritance. On leaving Veletri, he was accompanied by a squadron of cuirassiers as far as Terracina, where he was to stop. The neighbouring towns sent detachments of soldiers, to prevent the disorders that might have been occasioned by an immense crowd of people, attracted by curiosity from all parts of the ecclesiastical state, as well as of the kingdom of Naples. During the few days which he passed at Terracina, he occupied the modest habitation of a private individual. Thence he went to visit the Pontine marshes, which are only at a few miles distance; and there he dispatched the ordinary business of the state, which admitted of no delay. Important affairs were postponed till his return.

After a journey which lasted in all twelve days, he returned to Rome exceedingly well satisfied. According to the custom observed with all sovereigns, both great and small, such parts only of the works that he went to see were shewn to him as were calculated to inspire him with brilliant hopes. He was even told, that in a year his great enterprise would be completed; and, by his orders, gold and silver medals were distributed to the workmen. He was desirous that every heart should partake of his joy. On his way out and home he travelled with pleasure along that noble road, which, since its re-establishment under his auspices, had changed its name from *Via Appia* to *Via Pia*; that road which still attracts the admiration of travellers, and which is perhaps the only thing really useful that has resulted from such a world of pains and expense. From that very time it was foreseen that the complete draining of the marshes would be impossible, because the water which covered them

was

was lower than the sea, and because it was fed by the streams that flowed incessantly from the neighbouring mountains. To obviate this difficulty, Pius VI. ordered a new canal to be cut. Always aiming at brilliant enterprises instead of useful undertakings, he conceived while upon the spot the idea of building a new city, in the midst of the land recovered from the water. A plan of it was drawn under his own inspection. This city, which was to contain ten thousand families, was to be a perfect square, intersected by a large canal intended to receive the water of all the neighbouring streams. The canal itself was to fall into the sea, after having in its course favoured exportation and inland trade. The poverty of the Apostolical Chamber obliged Pius VI. to defer this project to better times. On his return he visited the lake of Fogliano, and the quarries of marble recently discovered in a mountain upon the coast; and went also to see what progress was making in the sumptuous buildings he was adding to the abbey of Subiaco. He was possessed of it before he arrived at the pontifical throne; and every thing that was nearly or distantly connected with it was to be embellished or enriched. He was constructing there a superb church, a seminary, and a palace; splendid, but useless and expensive works, which added not a little to the distress of the Roman finances, and which already indicated his ruinous taste for magnificence and show.

During this journey many sumptuous ruins were shewn to him, which appeared to have belonged to the ancient city of Sueffa-Pometia, and to the sumptuous edifices which formerly embellished the Appian way. Among these ruins had been found fragments of antique statues, inscriptions, bas-reliefs, and articles of furniture; some mutilated by time, others not at all disfigured. The pope immediately gave orders to collect these precious relics, and to reserve them for the museum of the city it was his intention to found.

But Pius VI. never experienced any satisfaction unmixed with alloy. Unlucky accidents, or at least strong apprehensions, constantly obtruded themselves upon his joys, or disturbed his repose. Scarcely was he returned from the Pontine marshes, when he learned that the court of Naples envied him the brilliant fruit of his solicitude, and his principal claim to glory. The marquis della Sambucca,  
who,

who, without having inherited the marquis di Tanucci's ill-will to the Holy See, had at that time personal reasons of complaint against Pius VI., was engaged, it was said, in drawing up a state paper, in which a great part of the Pontine marshes, and of the city of Terracina, was claimed as the property of the kingdom of Naples. Envy already saw, with uneasiness, a country, so closely bordering upon that kingdom, arrived at a high degree of cultivation; the miserable inhabitants of Abruzzo, led away by the attractions of this new Eden; a magnificent city rising in the midst of marshes; and the port of Terracina affording a safe shelter to small vessels, and rivalling that of Naples. This state paper actually appeared, and threw the pope into great consternation. He found some consolation, however, in the heart of the cardinal de Bernis; often his severe censor, but always his friend. The pontifical archives were immediately searched, in order to procure materials for a complete refutation. These efforts of erudition, which would have been of no avail against the execution of a plan seriously in agitation, were in the present case useless; the malignity of the Neapolitan minister being satisfied, for this time, with the agonies into which he had thrown the holy father.

The uneasy jealousy of the court of Naples was, after all, premature; for the brilliant chimeras of Pius VI. were very far from being realised. Shortly after his return, several persons, among others the duke de Grimaldi, then Spanish ambassador, went to pay a visit to the Pontine marshes, and informed him on their return, no doubt in a lamentable tone, that the execution of his magnificent project was considered as impracticable. "The hidden springs never ceased to flow; and the bottom of the marsh was decidedly lower than the level of the sea. The part adjacent to the mountains promised an abundant harvest; but the opposite side was doomed to remain for ever under water." There might be some exaggeration in these alarming accounts; but the truth was, that the works had not by a great deal answered the brilliant expectations of the preceding year. Eighteen hundred men were constantly employed; but pestilential vapours had spread among them an epidemical disease; and the heavy rains had caused considerable inundations. The seed was buried, and lay rotting under water. The proprietors of the land, deceived in  
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their speculations, applied to the Apostolical Chamber for indemnity; proved that the sluices intended as drains were not constructed according to the rules of art; and attributed their losses to the unskilfulness of the engineers.

The eye of the master being deemed necessary a second time, Pius VI. repaired again to the spot, in order to investigate these evils, and, if possible, to apply a remedy. He arrived at Terracina; and instead of receiving the tribute of gratitude, heard nothing but murmurs and complaints. Full of the objects which he had before his eyes, he wrote to Pallavicini, the secretary of state, that he was resolved that the great work, which he had so much at heart, should in future be carried on with greater activity. But there was a want of money; and it could only be supplied by an increase of taxes, which provoked complaints of another kind. The pontiff was surrounded by rocks; and whatever course he steered was sure to excite discontent, and to feel the same sentiment himself.

But what could he see, what could he determine upon with due deliberation, in journeys so rapidly performed? At the end of a few days he returned to Rome with such celerity, that his physician was alarmed for his health. Pius VI. alledged, as an excuse, the interests of so many religious societies, which would suffer by his absence; that of the generals of orders; and that of the whole catholic world, which stood so much in need of his paternal sollicitude. Sovereigns, merely temporal, find it so difficult to fulfil their immense task! What then is to be expected from those who are bound to attend equally to the affairs of heaven, and to those of the earth?

The works at the Pontine marshes went on, nevertheless, and the hopes of the pope began to revive, when another inundation, in 1783, gave him new alarm. He undertook a third journey thither, and found that the ravages of the water had been exaggerated. Vicar of the divinity on earth, he seemed to think that his presence re-established order among the elements, or that, like another Neptune, a *quos ego* from his mouth sufficed to overawe the waves. He set off discouraged, and almost in despair; he came back reassured and contented. In the following year (1784) he also made a journey of a fortnight to the Pontine marshes, and brought back with him the same confidence as to the success of his plan; but he was not yet at the end of his troubles.

bles. Not only censure, through the medium of Pasquin, lavished the most cruel sarcasms upon his darling enterprise; but the very persons who were the most attached to him endeavoured to dissuade him from it. In 1785, cardinal Orsini, having crossed the Pontine marshes on his return from Naples, afflicted him with the most discouraging objections. Foreigners, more impartial in their observations, were equally liberal of their criticism upon this favourite offspring of his vanity. An English traveller expressed himself thus in 1787: † "The execution of this plan has been ill managed; experience having proved that there is not a sufficient declivity to carry off the water. After ten years labour there is not so much land drained as there was in the time of Augustus; and the air is become still more unwholesome. Besides, is there not in the ecclesiastical state more good land than its population (2,200,000 souls) can cultivate? With half the money a much more advantageous result might have been obtained. Works so long and so expensive have produced no advantage but the re-establishment of the Appian way, which for a tenth part of the sum might have been completely restored."

The judicious Archenholtz, in his work concerning Italy, expresses himself with still greater severity. He applauds the undertaking in itself, but considers the means as very inadequate, and the result as very unsatisfactory. According to him, the wages of the workmen are too small; their habitations are miserable huts, where, almost as naked as savages, and as pale and livid as ghosts, they go to rest themselves after their dangerous labours. This project, conceived by the pope with the best intention, became, in the hands of the Apostolical Chamber, which presided over its execution, one of those ruinous puerilities, with which it dazzled the vulgar, and satiated its own thirst of gold.

But all these criticisms, and all this opposition which he met with from human passions, and from the elements, did not discourage Pius VI. The spring of 1787 saw him appear again in the supposed theatre of his glory. This time he convinced himself with his own eyes of the ravages occasioned by the inundations. His favorite nephew, the

† This English author is so vaguely indicated, that it has not been possible to discover the original text: it has therefore been necessary to re-translate the translation.



duke di Nemi, who was in possession of a part of the drained land, on seeing the unfortunate result of so much labour, endeavoured to prevail upon him to desist. The undertaking had already cost a million of Roman crowns. All the money he could command was already exhausted; but not so the perseverance, or, more properly speaking, the obstinacy of the holy father. The work was continued, but with great tardiness, and upon a scale proportioned to the smallness of his resources. In vain did the project-makers, particularly one Muller, who had the superintendence of the custom-house and the tolls, devise new ones. They only served to irritate the impoverished subject, and to render the sovereign odious, without producing the means of defraying such an enormous expense. In short, after so much anxiety, and after twelve years labour, the whole country, extending from Cisterna to Terracina, was no more than a frightful and pestilential morass, except a few spots of ground restored to cultivation, a handsome road, and a canal, which bears the name of *Linea Pia*.

The following year was witness to another journey to the Pontine marshes; and to new pecuniary efforts for the carrying on of the works. Under the pretence of securing a part at least of the treasures of our lady of Loretto from the plundering hands of the Algerines, bars of silver, of the value of 400,000 Roman crowns, were taken thence, and carried to the Apostolical Chamber; which paid the *Santa Casa* interest at three and a half per cent. A large portion of this sum was said to have been expended on the marshes; in other words, was, in the public opinion, as good as thrown away; for malevolence was more and more busy in decrying the enterprise. *Sono andate alle paludi Pontine* (they are gone to the Pontine marshes), was a proverb current throughout the Roman state, when any one wished to speak of sums of money expended in extravagant schemes.

In passing through the streets of Rome, Pius VI. often heard himself called *il seccatore* †, a nick-name of a double meaning; alluding at once to his rage for *drying up* the marshes, and to the inconvenience suffered by the people upon that account. In short, he derived nothing but maledictions and sarcasms from the only operation which ought to have thrown a lustre upon his pontificate. In the eyes

\* From *seccare* to dry. A stupid thing or troublesome fellow, in vulgar English a bore, is in Italian conversation called *una seccatura*. T.

of his subjects it was no more than a folly of which they were obliged to pay the expense, and by which they profited little; foreigners alone enjoying the fruit of so much labour, and such immense sums of money. When they travelled along the noble Appian way, restored by Pius VI., they did not see the treasures swallowed up by the surrounding marshes; they did not see the multitude of wretches who had died a lingering death, victims to the pestilential vapours that exhaled from them. They applauded the brilliant result of these laborious and dangerous works as we admire the astonishing pyramids of Egypt, without thinking of the myriads of slaves employed in their construction, or as the giddy multitude admires some splendid *fête*, given by a rich man embarrassed in his affairs, where the company enjoy themselves, and the manager triumphs, while his needy creditors are bursting with rage.

The principal end of this undertaking, that of purifying the air, is far from having been attained. Travellers tremble while driving the six posts and a half, that these marshes extend along the Appian way, particularly the first that occurs on leaving Terracina. Nothing, however, announces the danger that environs them. It is true that the brilliant verdure, of which they have an extensive prospect on either hand, consists of little else than rushes, which occupy almost the whole of the space that is not covered with timber or brush-wood; and from this single indication they easily divine that they are travelling across a morass. But at the same time the horizon seems as serene as in the rest of Italy, and the air appears as free from vapours as in the most salubrious country. They only perceive at a distance the ridge of the Apennines covered with clouds, pretty much as the summits of high mountains generally are; but woful experience ought to put them upon their guard against these deceitful appearances. It is impossible for them to drive with too much speed through this district, where death seems to have established his empire. They ought above all to avoid passing the Pontine marshes by night, or even at its approach. Woe to him who closes his eyes during this dangerous journey: he runs a great risk of never opening them again. The livid countenances of those, whom want, or habit, confines to this spot, sufficiently attest its unhealthiness. Their languishing existence is little else than death more or less prolonged. Hence it

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it is that scarcely any habitations are to be seen upon the road, except those which are intended for the service of the post. The wretches who occupy them inspire a degree of compassion which it is difficult to conceal from them; and they themselves are aware of the slowness of the thread on which their life depends. A few years ago a traveller perceiving a group of these animated spectres, asked them, how they contrived to live in such a country? *We die*, answered they. The traveller was struck with this sublime and mournful laconism; which will enable the reader to form a judgment of the country, of its inhabitants, and of the services rendered to them by Pius VI.

However, while meaning to be humane and compassionate, let us take care not to be unjust. The making of a noble road between Rome and Naples is certainly of some advantage to the Romans, and to the inhabitants of part of the ecclesiastical state; since, by facilitating the communication between the two largest cities in Italy, it is calculated to vivify the intermediate country. Before the restoration of the Appian way, there was no going from one to the other without taking a circuitous route through Foglia, ascending the sides of the Appennines, and afterwards descending to Terracina, by Sermoneta and Piperno.

But, as to that part of the magnificent plan adopted by Pius VI. which tended directly to an useful end, it must be confessed that the improvements were very defective. All the works were undertaken and paid for by the Apostolical Chamber, and the sums of money appropriated to them were for the most part abandoned to the depredations of its agents. Some portions of the marshes were, however, fitted for cultivation, and farmed out by the Apostolical Chamber to inhabitants, whom repeated inundations often obliged to apply for relief. Pius VI., little scrupulous as to the means of enriching his family, was almost the only one who profited by the clear produce of his expensive undertaking. He had found means to form a handsome appanage for one of his nephews, out of the country recovered from the water; but this was only an additional grievance to his impoverished subjects. The French republic avenged them by confiscating that part of the land in question which belonged to the duke di Nemi.

It has been calculated that the sums employed in these vain attempts would have sufficed to fertilise and restore to  
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a flourishing condition a great deal of ground in the ecclesiastical state, which bears witness to the sloth of its old government. Pius VI. sacrificed useful undertakings to vain glory. Magnificent roads, bridges and palaces, decorated with his arms, and bearing his name, appeared more seductive to his vanity than fields covered with abundant crops. He has also left much to be done for the draining of the Pontine marshes. Immediately after the occupation of the ecclesiastical state by the republican troops, a company of Frenchmen undertook the completion of this business, but were obliged to relinquish it for want of the necessary funds. It will, no doubt, be one of the first undertakings of the new Roman government.

It remains to be said, that this great enterprise was one of the principal causes of the ruin of the Roman finances. Their disorder, when Pius VI. obtained the tiara, was already great. It was increased by that pontiff's avidity, by his taste for ostentation, and by his prodigality towards his nephews. Far from remedying the abuses of an administration radically defective, he augmented them by his weakness and by his example. This is what we are about to develope in the following chapters.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Vices of the Roman Administration ; particularly that of PIUS VI.*

WE shall not undertake to describe in detail the form of the Roman government which has been recently destroyed. It will suffice to say, that no one was ever more complicated, nor was ever any one less answerable to the real end of all government, that of ruling mankind by the mere force of the laws, and of encouraging them, by rewards held out to industry, to labour for their own happiness. It may, therefore, be said without exaggeration, that no country was ever worse administered than the ecclesiastical state, especially in these latter times. Pius VI. appeared at first to be sensible of its defects, and to have conceived the pro-  
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ject of removing them. He appointed a congregation of cardinals, who were particularly enjoined to find a remedy for the disorder of the finances; and to give the taxes a form less burdensome to the state, and less intolerable to individuals. He only felt an inclination to do good by starts; and, though pretty much inclined to despotism, never had that strong volition which sometimes renders despots supportable, by impelling them to the performance of works of utility. At the first aspect of danger he displayed something like courage; but was frightened as soon as he had leisure to contemplate it. Obstacles at first seemed only to strengthen his resolution; but he soon implored the assistance of Italian craft in order to evade them, or else undid all that he had done. He was particularly fearful of appearing to be governed; and yet he was often so; but it was rather through fear, with which he was easily inspired, than by the ascendancy of affectionate sentiments, or by that of reason.

He began his reign, however, by several measures which seemed to indicate firmness, and a sincere desire to put an end to the disorder of the finances. He even gave, in that department, a proof of severity, which had well nigh involved him in a quarrel with the two crowns, whose friendship it was most his interest to cultivate. Scarcely had Clement XIV. closed his eyes, when Nicholas Bischi, his relation and friend, whom he had placed at the head of the administration of provisions, was suddenly called upon to give an account of the expenditure of 900,000 thousand crowns, which he had received for the purpose of buying corn during a great scarcity. Pius VI. who had made a great parade of integrity during the time he was treasurer, wished to support his reputation, by prosecuting without mercy an administrator suspected of dishonest conduct. He even manifested upon this occasion a degree of animosity, which made the French and Spanish ministers accuse him of persecuting Bischi less as a peculator than as the favourite of Clement XIV., and of wishing to bring an odium upon the government of that pontiff. Notwithstanding the influence which the two ministers already possessed in a variety of respects, Bischi was obliged to stand a trial; the result of which was very unfavourable, since he was condemned to refund 242,000 crowns, though he produced vouchers for the expenditure of all the sums intrusted to him, and had  
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already given in his accounts to Clement XIV., by whom they had been approved. This sentence was rather dictated by prejudice than by severe equity. It was particularly promoted by Livizzani, a furious partisan of the Jesuits, and an implacable enemy to any one who was hostile to their interests. Never, perhaps, did Pius VI. shew more tenacity than upon this occasion. He obstinately refused to grant Bischi a respite of eight days, which he requested, in order to draw up a justification. In vain did the cardinal de Bernis, and the duke de Grimaldi, then Spanish ambassador, intercede in Bischi's behalf. His sentence was executed with the utmost rigour, and his property sold much under its value, to make good the sum he was bound to replace. The two ministers of the house of Bourbon endeavoured at least to make the prelate Livizzani expiate the indecent partiality with which he sought to injure the memory of Clement XIV. But Livizzani was, nevertheless, promoted very shortly after to the legation of Urbino, and found his conduct upon this occasion no impediment to his attainment of a cardinal's hat. All that the king of Spain could do in favour of Bischi, who was more unfortunate than guilty, was to rescue him from indigence, by granting him a pension of 1500 Roman crowns.

But it was not long ere the zeal of Pius VI., for the prosecution of peculators, began to cool. From the very first years of his pontificate abuses of every kind had made an alarming progress, and the people, deceived in almost all their hopes, began to murmur aloud. A general clamour arose, particularly against the Apostolical Chamber.

That name alone awakens the idea of the most incapable and most disastrous administration. It is well known that it had the supreme direction of the finances in all their principal branches. It was less a ministry, than an aggregation of ministers; who, under different titles, were charged to receive, to preserve, to dispense, and to defend, the public treasure; and who most frequently, acquitted themselves of these various functions with equal rapacity and ignorance. The first post in the Apostolical Chamber was held by the cardinal *Camerlingo*, who might be compared to the *quaestors* of ancient Rome. His office was the first in modern Rome, and was still more closely connected with the government of the church than of the state. Its origin was as remote as the early times of Christianity; and

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in rank it was only below the papal dignity. As soon as a sovereign pontiff died, the cardinal Camerlingo took possession of the honours of the papacy, and became a kind of regent : his authority, and the honours paid to him, lasting as long as the conclave. So eminent a place was calculated to give great influence to him who occupied it. It was conferred in the reign of Clement XIII. upon cardinal Rezzonico, who preserved it during the two following pontificates to the moment of the Roman revolution. But the cardinal, unlike his brother, who had well nigh embroiled the church and a great part of Europe by means of his famous monitory against the duke of Parma, was of a mild and moderate disposition ; and though he was the nominal chief of the party of the *zelanti*, and so long occupied the first dignity at Rome, never possessed any great share of influence.

The cardinal *Camerlingo* was then, properly speaking, at the head of the Apostolical Chamber ; and none of the edicts of that supreme council had any force, unless subscribed with his name ; but under cardinal Rezzonico this signature was little more than an empty formality.

Immediately under the *camerlingo*, was the *treasurer*. Braschi, during fifteen years, had filled this place ; the most important in the pope's administration. The treasurer possessed, rather in fact than by right, an almost absolute authority over every thing relating to the imposts. He had it in his power to abuse this authority with impunity ; which sufficiently implies that it was frequently abused.

When the treasurer conducted himself like an honest man, as it appears that Braschi did, it is natural to suppose that malversations were not common : but he was assisted by three deputies, between whom the whole ecclesiastical state was divided. It was among them particularly that obstinacy was found united with unfeeling ignorance. They had a very small salary ; but they were so rapacious, and received so many presents, that they soon acquired a scandalous opulence.

The treasurer had immediately under him the commissary of the Apostolical Chamber. He it was who transacted business with all the grantees and farmers of the state. His favour, which was seldom bestowed gratuitously, was indispensably necessary to them. If they were unfortunate enough to displease him, there was no chicane which they might not expect, nor any exactions to which they were not

liable. He was charged to enforce all the real or pretended claims of the Apostolical Chamber.

Thus, however pure might be the intentions of the heads of office, every thing was subject to the caprices and to the rapacity of underlings. Braschi, when elevated to the dignity of cardinal, was succeeded in his post of treasurer by the prelate Palotta, one of the most upright men in Rome, and even one of the most enlightened; his manner was rude and repulsive; he was the dread of intriguers and knaves; but he could not reach them in the shade under which they contrived to conceal themselves. He attempted to effect several useful reforms; but, counteracted by his inferiors in office, and ill seconded by the pope himself, he was able to give proofs of little more than of his zeal and understanding. Pius VI. held him in great esteem. When he raised him to the cardinalate, he suffered him to keep his place contrary to custom; but, inconstant in his affections, and inconsistent in all his measures, he was unjust that he might not appear ungrateful. He was indebted for the beginning of his good fortune to the house of Ruffo. A cardinal of that name, being struck with his fine person, shewed him particular attention, and took him into his house, when he first arrived at Rome from Cesena, while still a very young man. But Benedict XIV. being in want of a secretary, cardinal Ruffo recommended Braschi, who wrote a very fine hand, and whose services were accepted by the pope. This favour, to which he was indebted for the commencement of his fortunate career, had made a deep impression upon his mind. A prelate, nephew to his benefactor, was at Rome. He was an enlightened man, brilliant even in his vices, immoral, and perfectly well calculated for intrigue. He spared nothing to attract the attention of a pope, who was the creature of his house; flattered the vanity of the pontiff, and easily obtained a place in a heart already predisposed in his favour by gratitude. Pius VI. thought it incumbent on him to acquit himself of his debt at the expense of the virtuous cardinal Palotta, and conferred on the prelate Ruffo the place of treasurer of the Apostolical Chamber. He could not make a choice more likely to excite the public indignation against him; and at the same time to gratify his own rapacity. Ruffo, destitute of all scruples as to himself, felt none while favouring the prevailing passions of the pontiff; his vanity, his prodigality, and his blind attachment to his family. Fearing, in his

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turn to be deficient in gratitude, he encouraged Pius VI in his seductive, but disastrous projects; and, without forgetting himself, enriched the pope's nephews in the most scandalous manner. It is thus that, by an interchange of favours conferred and received, weaknesses, and even vices, sometimes assume the specious appearance of gratitude.

This prelate, Ruffo, contributed more than all the other ministers employed during the long pontificate of Pius VI. to render him odious to the Roman people; and to impel the government to its ruin, by increasing its debt to a degree hitherto unknown. When Braschi was himself treasurer, and presented, in 1766, the accounts of the Apostolical Chamber, its debts amounted to sixty-one millions of crowns. In 1789 they had increased to eighty-seven. The criminal complaisance of Ruffo had, in compliance with the ruinous caprices of the pope, issued an enormous quantity of *cedole*. That paper money was at six or seven per cent. discount; and articles of the first necessity had risen to an intolerable price; for the price of grain was, in the ecclesiastical state, the source of the greatest abuses, and might, at some moment or other, become that of the greatest disasters. The country, though indifferently cultivated, might have sufficed for the subsistence of the inhabitants. In good years, notwithstanding defective husbandry, there was sometimes a surplus of wheat to export; but in dry seasons every kind of crop failed, and both men and cattle were famished. The government was in this respect entirely destitute of foresight; it *lived from hand to mouth*; that is to say, the governed were often upon the point of starving. The Roman nobility and the cardinals had always resources in the produce of their farms; but when the crops were bad, the rest of the Roman people ran a risk of experiencing the most dreadful famine.

These abuses, and these dangers, proceeded above all from the manner in which the pope's subjects were supplied with provisions. At the head of the department of subsistence was a præfect of the *annona*, who superintended the whole ecclesiastical state, except the three legations (those of Bologna, Ferrara, and the presidency of the duchy of Urbino). It was he who was particularly charged with the victualling of Rome. An exportation of corn was forbid; and the farmers were exposed to the most cruel impositions; the government buying up almost all their crops at its own price.

price. It retained, however, the power of enriching persons in favour, by granting them particular permissions to export. Thus every thing was calculated to excite complaints, and render misery infallible. This branch of the public affairs was managed with so little address, that it did not even enrich itself while impoverishing the people; but, on the contrary, within the two last years incurred a debt of two millions of crowns. Hence it was that the French, when they occupied the ecclesiastical state, found agriculture in the most deplorable situation. Ill-advised in all its plans, even in those which seemed to have the public welfare for their object, the government had devised a plan highly injurious to the cultivator, with a view of reviving the spirit of agriculture. The general sloth, which proceeded much less from the disposition of the inhabitants than from the vices of the government, suffered a great part of this country, so much favoured by nature, to lay totally waste. Along the banks of the Adriatic sea the fertility of the soil was turned at least to some account, that district producing corn, pulse, oil, wine, wood, hemp, wool, and silk, in tolerable abundance; but on the opposite coast not a twentieth part of the land was in a state of cultivation. What did the Roman government contrive under the pontificate of Pius VI. in order to remedy this evil? It authorised the farmers of estates to till any land in their neighbourhood, whether comprised in their lease or not; but as this permission might prove too weak an excitement to sloth, it decreed, that, where farmers neglected to avail themselves of it, the præfect of the *annona* might send a plough into the waste lands, and have them sown on account of the Apostolical Chamber. After this they were to remain at his mercy as long as he might think proper. The farmer was thus dispossessed of his rights, and the proprietor was forced to accept, as the rent of his land, thus cultivated without his consent, whatever it produced in a state of pasturage. Never did government seem to carry its paternal solicitude to a greater length. To stand thus in the place of its children! To take upon itself the trouble at which their indolence recoiled! What a sublime conception of philanthropy! But it is well known how those concerns are managed, which are undertaken by even the most active and most enlightened governments. The reason why the fine plan devised by that of Rome did not prove more disastrous was

was its being put very imperfectly into execution. The decay of agriculture in the ecclesiastical state proceeded from a radical vice ; from that establishment of the *annona*, an endless source of oppression, and the cause of the most scandalous monopoly. Before the reign of the great duke Leopold, Tuscany was cursed with a similar institution. It was destroyed ; and since that period the Tuscan agriculture has been in the most flourishing state. But Rome seemed to be the favourite country of prejudices of every kind, which appeared to be sanctioned by long custom, as well as by religion itself. So many people were interested in their preservation, that their destruction could never come from the interior. Diffolution was inevitable ; a violent overthrow almost impossible. Besides, profane and sacred abuses were so interwoven in a government, where the throne was upon the altar, that it appeared impossible to touch the former without attacking the latter. Of whatever nature they may be, they are always intimately connected. Of this France affords us a proof. Who did not desire, in 1789, the abolition of *corvées*, the suppression of gabels, the equal distribution of the taxes, &c. ? But no sooner was the accomplishment of this unanimous wish in agitation, than the impulsion given by enthusiasm reached all other abuses, in spite of those who were interested in their preservation.

But let us return to the other vicious institutions which existed at the accession of Pius VI., and which only grew worse during his pontificate.

It was not enough for the subjects of the pope to lie at the mercy of his government in regard to their supply of corn ; but they were also condemned to suffer the same hardship with respect to meat and oil. The government, as if it had conspired against the land-holders, taxed the beasts that were brought to market at a low price, and did not easily grant permission to export them. How then could any one have an interest in breeding cattle ? Government also enjoyed the monopoly of oil. All that was produced in the ecclesiastical state was brought to Rome ; and there the price was fixed by the department of *La Grascia*, which afterwards sold it to the retail dealers. The result of the means taken to furnish the Roman people with provisions in abundance, and at a cheap rate, was, that meat, bread, and oil, were scarce, and consequently dear ; that the supply of the latter, which the ecclesiastical state might have produced in sufficient quantity

tity to do without the assistance of foreigners, often failed; that there was an annual necessity for importing a large quantity from the kingdom of Naples; and that the establishments charged with these monopolies ruined the people while they were ruining themselves. Hence it was that the populace, in these latter times, often broke out into murmurs; and that the pope, while passing through the streets of Rome, and distributing benedictions, the only thing which he lavished upon his *faithful subjects*, was more than once greeted with these alarming words: *Holy father, it is not benedictions that we want; it is meat and oil.* But the Roman people were sensible of their own weakness, as well as of that of their government; and seemed to wait, like the man in the gospel afflicted with the palsy, for some kind hand to throw them into the pool.

Manufactures, commerce, every thing at Rome partook of this weakness; the certain harbinger of an approaching dissolution.

In the ecclesiastical state there were several manufactories of common linen, for the use of the lower classes of people.

There was also at Rome a manufactory of tapestry, wrought with considerable art into excellent imitations of the finest pictures; but it was only one of those establishments of parade which tend rather to impoverish than to benefit the subject. We shall pass over in silence a few manufactories of silk, a little above mediocrity. Pius VI., while treasurer, had persuaded Clement XIV. to establish, at the expense of the Apostolical Chamber, manufactories of cotton; which have had the fate of all those that governments manage on their own account. Hats, even those of the finest quality, and some silken stuffs, were also manufactured, and not altogether without success; but the only branch of industry which really flourished, in spite of the vices of administration, was the tanning of leather.

As to commerce, every thing seemed to conspire against its prosperity. In no country was it burdened with more prohibitions; and that disastrous system was still further extended by Pius VI. To ensure the success of the cotton manufactory, which he considered as his own work, he imposed, in 1777, a duty of 24 per cent. upon all foreign cottons. Hence resulted, as always happens in similar cases, an encouragement, not for the manufactory which it

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is intended to secure against rivalry, but for contraband trade. Besides, nothing could be exported without the permission of the prelates, who presided over the different establishments; and these exceptions to the general rule were not granted without difficulty, and experienced in their execution a number of impediments and delays. The production which alone, perhaps, ought to have been kept in the country, was very easily exported: this was the wool, which is of an excellent quality, and might have employed a great number of hands. But instead of doing so, it was sent in great quantities to France and Switzerland; came back afterwards manufactured; and the poor Romans, who might have clothed themselves with their own hands, and with their own wool, were condemned to pay the wages of foreign industry. Some manufactories of fine cloth were, however, set up; among others, that which is known at Rome by the name of St. Michael. But their administration was so expensive, that although they produced cloth very little inferior to those of France and England, the latter were preferred, because they could be had at a cheaper rate. These were far from being the only commodities for which the Roman people were tributary to foreigners. The imports into the ecclesiastical state were enormously great. Some idea of this may be formed by a single article. A few years since it was calculated, that the chocolate it received annually from abroad amounted to near two millions of Roman crowns.

The Apostolical Chamber, by its bad management, was responsible for all these causes of impoverishment. The finances, of which it administered the principal branches, visibly decayed in their hands. It was always very difficult to ascertain with precision the revenue of the ecclesiastical state. The most authentic calculations made it amount to two millions and a half of Roman crowns (about 600,000l. sterling), including the produce of the custom-house, and of the receipts of the *datario*, and of the chancery. The territorial revenue which it collected might alone have been made to produce eight hundred thousand Roman crowns; but as it was farmed out by favour and intrigue, it scarcely yielded four hundred and fifty thousand. Carelessness and incapacity did more mischief in the ecclesiastical state than the most cruel extortions, and the most scandalous depredations, do in others. There was no great grievance to complain

complain of ; and yet disorder prevailed every where. The causes of dissolution, that were silently acting upon this country, resembled those chronic disorders which, though unattended by violent pains, lead to an inevitable and approaching death.

The government not only wanted sufficient energy and information for the administration of the finances, and for the encouragement of industry, but also for the repression of crimes, in a country where every thing conspired to render them common ; the influence of a burning climate ; idleness ; a want of education ; and the hope of impunity founded upon the privileges attached to a number of places and persons. It was particularly at Rome that all these causes of disorder had a powerful influence. During the eleven years that the pontificate of Clement XIII. lasted, ten thousand murders were committed in the ecclesiastical state, and near four thousand in the capital alone.

Almost all modern Romans had at hand the means of speedily satisfying their anger or their vengeance. There were few who did not carry pocket pistols ; and they were still better provided with their favourite weapon, the stiletto. In vain did prohibitions proscribe the use of those murderous instruments. Respected only by those in regard to whom they were unnecessary, they were infringed by those whose malignity rendered them formidable, and by the multitude of idle persons attached to the service of the prelates, cardinals, and grandees. One of the prerogatives of those illustrious personages was to be surrounded with assassins ; the government, which passed for a mild one, because it was weak, having little regard for the life of the citizens, but, at the same time, a great respect for privileges. These fatal immunities extended every where. To enjoy them it was sufficient to be under the protection of a foreign power, and particularly of a foreign priest. Of this a striking instance occurred in 1784.

Don Miguel Espinosa, a Spanish priest, committed a forgery upon the Roman bank. It was a capital offence, and the fact was ascertained ; but he had a double claim to the indulgence of the government. The governor of Rome sent his agents to his apartments ; and the priest with great composure shewed them the notes that he had forged. Compliments being paid him upon the excellence of the imitation, he named one of his friends, who had sent him  
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from Naples the paper on which they were fabricated ; and gave some of them to the agents of the governor, in order that they might be compared with the genuine bills. The resemblance was found to be perfect. As the place of governor of Rome led to the dignity of cardinal, he who occupied it did not wish to mar his fortune by an act of severe justice. He had an interview with Pallavicini, the secretary of state, who enjoined him secrecy, and afterwards waited upon the Spanish ambassador. They sent for Don Miguel, who confessed that he had been several years at Rome soliciting a benefice ; that as yet he had been able to obtain nothing from the pope but hopes ; that having spent the little money he brought with him, he had no other means of existence left but that of forging the *cedole* ; and that the amount of those which he had already put into circulation was not less than five thousand crowns. The minister and the cardinal looked at each other, astonished at the frankness of the culprit ; but the question was to avoid a publicity disgraceful to Don Miguel's nation, and to save the church from so scandalous a reproach. At the same time, as it was not right to let a *poor wretch* starve who was about to be deprived of his only resource, the cardinal agreed that he should be allowed a pension of twenty crowns a month, till such time as a *good* benefice should be given him. Don Miguel, on his part, had the goodness to promise not to forge any more *cedole*, provided the cardinal kept his word. And this was what was called a mild government.

Some years after a fact occurred, which shews how justice was administered at Rome, and what were the means devised by Pius VI. to supply the want of a vigilant police. It is mentioned by Gorani, who asserts that he had it from the Spanish ambassador.

Rovaglio, the pope's watchmaker, who lived in one of the most frequented streets of Rome, had run some risk of being robbed during the night. He went to complain to the prelate, since cardinal, Busca, then governor of Rome, who promised that a watch should be set over his house. The robbers, as well as the watchmaker, knew the worth of such a promise, and determined to take their revenge. But Rovaglio, who was prepared for them, supplied the defect of the police ; and a second time they missed their aim. The pope seeing Rovaglio shortly after, asked him for  
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an account of his adventure, and furnished him with an expedient, characteristic at once of the pontiff, and of the government of Rome. *You must be hard put to it indeed, said he, to rid yourself of these robbers. In the name of God, why do you not provide yourself with muskets and pistols. Fire upon the rogues; and, in case of your killing them, I give you absolution before-hand.* Could a government which thus avowed its impotence expect a long duration? Accordingly several years before its overthrow, the Romans themselves said, by way of accounting for its preservation, that it was *a perpetual miracle of St Peter.*

The Jews were, perhaps, the only persons who had reason to complain of the severity, not to say of the cruelty, of the Roman government. Fanaticism, by turns ferocious and absurd, had dictated the laws beneath which they groaned, and which had acquired an increase of rigour under the pontificate of Pius VI. As long ago as the year 1775, the pontiff, persuaded that the laws of humanity were not made for infidels, had issued against them the most barbarous edict. Confined within their infectious quarter, the *Ghetto*, they could only shew themselves in the rest of the city by day, and were bound to return to their prison at sun-set, under *pain of death*. If they wished to go into the country for a few days, to breathe a purer air, they were obliged to solicit a particular permission. They were forbid, under the penalty of the gallies, to approach the convent of the Annonciada, or to be seen in any church, convent, or hospital, of Rome. All intercourse with Christians was forbidden them; and they incurred corporal punishment if they dared to keep a servant of that religion. A Christian could not admit them into his coach, nor even lend them one. It was only upon a journey that they were allowed the use of a carriage. As a mark of reprobation, neither men nor women could go out without wearing some badge of a yellow colour. Their interment was attended with no funeral pomp; nor did any inscription designate their tomb, and recall them to the recollection of those to whom they had once been dear.

These laws were not rigorously observed. Several were grown obsolete; and others carried with them, in their very severity, a sure pledge of their non-execution. But the stigma they affixed, to those against whom they were levelled, was indelible. They might be enforced at any time without



without a moment's warning: attempts were sometimes made to do so; and the Jews dragged on a miserable existence under the continual influence of terror. It was by dint of gold that some of them purchased momentary favours; such, for instance, as their enlargement from the infectious prison in which the rest of the sect was confined. Avarice, which at Rome neglected no means of gratification, sold to these unfortunate victims a few acts of toleration; and it was in the residence of him, who called himself the vicar of a merciful God, a God of charity, that these attacks were made upon human nature. Nor was this all. In a still more barbarous age, if it be possible, in the fifteenth century, the idea was conceived of assimilating the Jews to the brute creation, by making them run, during the carnival, for the diversion of the public, and in presence of the sovereign pontiff himself. There were at Rome Jew races, as there were horse-races elsewhere. At length they were exempted from this servile abasement; but, that they might not lose the remembrance of such an act of kindness, or rather to prolong their humiliation, they were obliged to send, to the chief magistrate of Rome, an annual deputation, which, in the most humble posture, paid a hundred crowns as a mark of their gratitude. The capitol was the scene of this unworthy imitation of the hostages, which the tributary kings of Asia formerly came to pay to the Roman senate.

Plagued in every outward act of life, the Jews of Rome were also tormented in their conscience. By virtue of an injunction, equally ridiculous and barbarous, they were obliged every sabbath, to hear a sermon, in which a Dominican, with a thundering voice, endeavoured to convert them by maledictions; and shewed them hell gaping to swallow them up, if they did not hasten to take refuge in the bosom of the church. In vain did the poor wretches strive to elude these periodical exhortations, equally tiresome and useless. They conceived the idea of stopping up their ears. Their ears were subjected to the examination of their tormentors. They slept, or feigned to sleep. They were shook till they awoke; and no resource remained but coughing, spitting, and yawning. At length they came out of church somewhat worse Christians than they went in; some laughing at the imbecillity of their tyrants, and others cursing a religion which employed such means, in  
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order to make profelytes. It may be truly said, that Pius VI., who, by a few good actions performed during his long career, had incurred some little suspicion of humanity ; it may be truly said, that he laid a greater load of intolerance upon these unfortunate victims than any one of his predecessors. They had more than one tribute to pay to his rapacity ; of which the effects were so fatal to himself, and the produce so ill employed. He seemed to have an exclusive taste for brilliant enterprises. Those which were only useful had no charms for his vanity. Instead of burying millions in the Pontine marshes ; instead of impoverishing his treasury to enrich the sacristy of St. Peter's, to embellish his abbey of Subiaco, and to establish at Cesena, his native place, a sumptuous library, which he could very well have dispensed with ; why did he not employ the surplus of his revenue in carrying on the repairs, begun by his predecessors, in the port of Ancona ? in confining to their beds the rivers of La Romagna and of the Ferrarese ; in draining the marshes of those two provinces ; and in thus restoring to salubrity and fertility a country formerly so wholesome, and in so high a state of cultivation ? The only means which he employed to improve it consisted in the making and repairing of roads ; and even this was done by oppressive means, which served only to add to the misery of the people. Contractors attended at the Apostolical Chamber, and proposed to him the making of a new road. Their plan met with his approbation. They advanced the money for its execution ; but, in order to reimburse them afterwards, the parishes interested in the work were arbitrarily taxed by the Apostolical Chamber. The pope had thus, it must be confessed, made several new roads, and had repaired the old ones ; and, at the moment when he finished his pontificate, it was the part of his administration the least neglected. But to how much discontent did he give rise, even when busied in undertakings which, if better contrived, might have been useful to the people ? He appeared insensible to their murmurs. Captivated with every thing that was likely to spread his fame to distant regions, he interested himself little in the public welfare. The father of the faithful forgot that he ought also to be the father of his subjects. He took no concern but for himself and his family ; and even his affection for his nephews was only a modification of self-love. The errors into which he was led

led by that sentiment, the offspring of his vanity, will be the subject of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *Nepotism of Pius VI.*

THE blind affection of the Roman pontiffs for their family, and particularly for their nephews, in whom, in default of children they could acknowledge, they seemed to see their existence renewed, often occasioned, in the government of modern Rome, a disorder almost unknown in other governments. The nephews of the popes generally filled the place of the favourites and mistresses of other sovereigns. The abuses thence resulting, though somewhat less scandalous, were not the less deplorable. Other despots may change their favourites and their mistresses; may strip them, after having enriched them; and may withdraw the confidence and credit of which they shew themselves unworthy. The mischief which is done by, and for them, may not be altogether irreparable. This is not the case with the pope's nephews. The vanity of the uncle protects them from all danger of inconstancy. His weakness insures them the easy acquirement of an ascendancy, and the certainty of retaining it. The families of an hereditary sovereign possess a permanent estate, independent of the life of a single man. The fortune of the relations of an elective sovereign depend upon the duration of his reign: consequently as the popes are chosen at an advanced age, it was not uncommon to see their nephews like the favourites of old Galba,

—————S'empressez ardemment,  
A qui dévoreroit le règne d'un moment †.

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† Eager to devour the reign of a moment.

The pontificate of Pius VI. united all these inconveniences; and the length of it carried them to an unexampled pitch: That of Clement XIII. had lasted but a short time; long enough, however, to develop the abuses of nepotism. He invested two of his nephews with the Roman purple, and it is well known what fatal consequences had well nigh resulted to him from the ascendancy which he suffered one of them to obtain.

Under his successor, Ganganelli, the very name of nepotism was almost forgotten. Equally destitute of the advantages of birth and fortune, he retained the modesty of his first condition. He declared, on assuming the tiara, that he would live like an apostle; and he kept his word. He did little or nothing for his family. Two of his nephews, who were sent for to the college of Rome without his knowledge, were presented to him. *If you study, said he, I will take care of you. If you are idle, I will send you back to your relations.* During the five years that their uncle's pontificate lasted, the favours they obtained from him were very trifling. They wept at his death; and though Clement XIV. possessed all the virtues which conciliate affection and esteem, theirs were almost the only tears that were shed. Nothing was done to console them.

Upon the accession of Pius VI. it was not expected that he would revive an abuse which had grown obsolete during the reign of his predecessor. The cardinal de Bernis wrote thus to Versailles: *He is the last of his name; there is therefore no nepotism to be feared.*

Il s'en présentera, gardez-vous d'en douter †.

Pius VI., who had, in fact, no male relation of his own name, began by announcing the most exemplary disinterestedness in regard to the preferment of his family. Having a promotion of cardinals to make about two months after his election, he was much pressed to give a hat to his uncle, prelate Bandi, an obscure, but worthy old man, who was bishop of Imola; but he refused with a firmness which seemed to be of excellent augury, as well as every thing else that was remarked in him during the first months of his reign. The following are the words in which he was described by an impartial observer, who had been in long habits

Relations, be assured, will present themselves.

habits of intimacy with him, and who was beginning to understand his character.

"Pius VI. has defects, and still greater prejudices. Political matters make but little impression upon him, because he has, during his whole life, followed the profession of advocate or judge. He is hasty and impetuous in the first moment; but soon grows calm of himself, or in consequence of the reasons which are alleged to him. It is useless to endeavour to make him accede to a project which he is determined to reject; but he willingly adopts a substitute. The great art with him is to flatter, or spare *his vanity*. He is fond of fame, and his heart is naturally humane and generous. It is a pity that his Roman education has a little injured the work of nature; but, with all that, no *popeable* cardinal is his superior."

Such, with some few restrictions, was the opinion entertained of him by several judicious persons, a short time before the revolution at Rome. Some principal traits of his character had then, however, escaped the discerning eye of his judges. We have already seen the errors into which he was led by his ungovernable love of splendid undertakings, and by the prodigality which resulted from it. We shall presently see those which originated in his affection for his nephews.

Formerly the pope's nephews had it in their power to enrich themselves by means of the pious tribute which flowed from every part of Europe into their uncle's treasury. But since that source has diminished, it has been only by oppressing their subjects that the popes have been able to indulge the weakness of nepotism; for the legitimate savings of a Roman pontiff are but of little account. Those of Ganganelli, notwithstanding the liberality of some foreign princes and his great economy, did not exceed seventy thousand crowns. We are about to see how Pius VI., who was far less scrupulous than his predecessor, supplied the deficiency of those means which were hitherto considered as legitimate.

His sister had two sons, who bore their father's name, Onesti. Before he sent for them to Rome, he was already busied about their fortune. As long ago as the year 1775 he bought of the duke di Lanti all the estates he possessed in the environs of Imola for the sum of sixty thousand crowns, and presented them to his young relatives. Neither of them were  
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known; when Romuald, the youngest, came to Rome at the beginning of 1778, and obtained a place in the ecclesiastical academy. His first appearance was very prepossessing. To a countenance at once sweet and expressive, he joined a great deal of candour and much amenity of manners. Pius VI. received him with the tenderness of a father, and lodged him in the apartments which he occupied before he was pope. Young Romuald, who passed two hours every day with his uncle, went out but little, and endeavoured to improve himself. Every body was pleased with him; and it was already foreseen that his preferment would not be neglected. The first favour that Pius VI. granted him was to dispatch him to France, as bearer of the cardinal's hat to Messieurs de Rohan and de la Rochefoucault. He was very anxious that he should be well received in that country, where there was then no cause of complaint against Pius VI. The cardinal de Bernis was of opinion, that the sending of his nephew to Paris could not fail to cement the good understanding that subsisted between the head of the church and its eldest son. He neglected nothing to gain his court's approbation of the pope's choice, and to interest it in favour of the young prelate. Onesti, who had already assumed his uncle's name, set out for Paris in the month of October.

It was during his stay there that Pius VI. was guilty of one of those head-strong acts, which he was apt to commit when left to his own discretion.

A suffragan of the elector of Treves, of the name of *Hontheim*, had, a few years before, published, under the name of *Febronius*, a book very bold for the time; and in which he recalled to mind the principles of the primitive church, and inveighed bitterly against the usurpations of the court of Rome. The holy see, which was in the habit of thinking religion in danger as often as any attack was made upon its prerogatives, was deeply affected by it. But the time for launching the spiritual thunder was gone by, and it was brooding over its sorrows in silence, when all on a sudden appeared a recantation of the work of Febronius. Pius VI., who could not contain his joy, proposed to celebrate with the greatest splendor this triumph of the Roman church. He was careful, however, not to entrust his project to the cardinal de Bernis, who would undoubtedly have opposed it, and with whom he was always upon the reserve whenever

whenever he had any injudicious measure in contemplation. On Christmas eve, after the midnight mass, when he was still panting after his pontifical fatigues, he got into the pulpit at St. Peter's church, and, in presence of all the cardinals, and of an immense auditory, read the edifying recantation with a stentorophonic voice, and accompanied it with a pretty violent invective against the maxims opposed to those of the Holy See, without recollecting that there were then several governments to which, by so doing, he might give offence. When his first enthusiasm subsided, he felt some compunction; and the severe observations of the cardinal de Bernis awakened his fears. His only punishment, however, was the sarcasms which were cast upon him with a liberal hand, even by the people of Rome.

When the prelate, his nephew, was informed of this ridiculous scene, he could not help blushing at the imprudence of the pope. He was in a country where, in good company particularly, these pious farces were criticised without mercy. A report had been spread, a short time before, that the sovereign pontiff's mind was a little deranged; and to the great mortification of young Romuald, the news of the scene, in which his holiness had been the sole actor, did not fail to accredit the rumour.

He returned to Rome in the course of April 1779. The pope at that time was only beginning to return from a very serious illness; and young count Onesti appeared much shocked at finding him in so feeble and languishing a state. His affliction was, no doubt, increased by the idea, that the cardinal's hat, which he expected as the reward of his mission, would elude his grasp. Ere long, however, his grief subsided: and his hopes were renewed by his uncle's convalescence. Pius VI. began to re-appear in public; and upon that occasion received from the public marks of affection which he had reason to think sincere, because they were then not altogether undeserved. He repaired on foot to the palace of Count Romuald, to see the pictures, the furniture, and the rich tapestry of which he had deprived himself, in order to add to the luxury of his nephew. While admiring these ornaments, he seemed to enjoy the sacrifices they had cost him; and gratitude appeared to the darling nephew a very agreeable tribute to pay. Tears stood in both their eyes; and the scene would have been moving, if it had not unfortunately been exhibited at the expense of the Roman people.

But a single nephew was not enough for the affection of Pius VI. Count Romuald had an elder brother, whose name was count Lewis, and who was as yet unknown. As he was not destined for the church, it was necessary to procure him a rich establishment by some other means. He made his appearance at Rome towards the end of the year. The Roman nobles, and all those whose interest it was to please the pope, loaded his two nephews with attentions, to which the latter were not backward in making a courteous return. It began to be foreseen that they would be a heavy charge to the state.

In the course of 1780, count Romuald was created apostolical prothonotary. This was a dignity purely honorary; but conferred a right of wearing the purple gown, and the title of *monsignore*. In the country of vanity by excellence, nothing more was necessary to render it desirable. But it had still other advantages. Without it there was no possibility of running the career of ambition. The individual, who wished to obtain it, was obliged to prove that he had an income of at least 1500 Roman crowns. It will easily be believed that the pope's nephew had no difficulty in furnishing this proof. Shortly after young Romauld was created *major domo* of the sovereign pontiff, that is to say, high steward of his household. This was one of those places which were called *cardinalitian*, because they led infallibly to a cardinal's hat. Such were also those of the governor of Rome, of the treasurer and auditor of the Apostolical Chamber, of the president of Urbino, the principal nunciatures, &c. In the conferring of these favours there was nothing objectionable: count Romuald only obtained dignities, which in default of him would have been given to others, and an income which was no burden to the public treasury. Besides, his talents were not of a splendid kind, and his disposition was quiet and unassuming. As he bore his faculties meekly, the favour he enjoyed was forgiven him. But how is it possible to forgive the pope the prodigality and excessive avidity which he afterwards indulged, in order to heap riches upon count Romauld and his brother?

The latter in particular, who, on his arrival from his own country, scarcely possessed five hundred Roman crowns, soon equalled in opulence the richest families of Rome, and took advantage of his uncle's weakness in order to collect



lect presents from all quarters, and to enter into speculations which betrayed the most shameful avarice. His marriage with donna Constanza, the daughter of that madame Falconieri, who was said to be his uncle's mistress, was celebrated in the course of the year 1781. Pius VI. gave them the nuptial benediction with great parade in the Sixtine chapel; pronounced upon the occasion one of those flowery discourses of which he was not sparing, and to which his talents were not ill adapted; sent to his nephew's house a casket containing ten thousand gold doubloons; and gave both to him and his bride a golden rosary set with diamonds, and a series of medals enriched with precious stones, &c. This was not enough. His nephew's match being greater in point of family than fortune, it gave occasion to a donation which excited many complaints. The estates that the Jesuits possessed at Tivoli had been confiscated in favour of the Apostolical Chamber; and one hundred and thirty thousand crowns had been offered for them by the prince of Santa Croce, and the marquis Bandini. The preceding year they had produced oil to the amount of twelve thousand crowns. The Apostolical Chamber parted with them to count Onești for sixty-five thousand, and allowed him sixty-five years to pay that sum. An acquisition so scandalously illegal could not prosper; and nobody would pity duke Braschi on account of the poverty to which he is reduced, if he had experienced no other losses. It was shortly after that he bought the estate of Nemi, which lies contiguous to his possessions at Tivoli, and of which he took the name. His marriage procured him donations of a less exceptionable kind. The kings of France and Spain sent presents to the new married couple; and they received others from the cardinals, the Roman princes, the nobility, the prelates, the bishops, the farmers of the Apostolical Chamber, and from the solicitors of favours of every class. The presents were assembled in a great hall, where the vanity of Pius VI. was gratified by a sight of them.

He neglected no means of laying liberality under contribution in favour of his nephews, particularly of that darling couple whom malignity took a pleasure in considering as his daughter and as his son-in-law. One of the customs of the court of Rome was to send consecrated babylinen to the children of the principal catholic sovereigns. Of what circumstance in life did not superstition avail itself

in order to extend its empire? Towards the end of the year 1781 Louis XVI. had a son born, and the prince of Asturias an Infant. Pius VI. entrusted to his niece the care of procuring the dresses that he was to send to the new-born princes. Countess Braschi accordingly set about making such purchases as might do honour to her taste, and to her uncle's munificence. She was in hopes that this refinement of attention would not be thrown away; and she already smiled at the prospect of the presents she was about to receive in return. Pius VI. made the same calculation; and they were not disappointed.

Shortly after, favours, pensions, and honours of all kinds were showered down upon the heads of this fortunate couple. In 1785 the king of Sardinia gave count Braschi a commandery worth more than two thousand crowns a year; created him at the same time a commander of his order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus, and sent him the great cross enriched with diamonds.

In the following year, the promotion of his brother to the cardinalate afforded Roman magnificence a new opportunity of displaying itself. It was a regular custom for the cardinals, at the time of their appointment, to make presents to the sovereign pontiff. If the disinterestedness of Ganganelli was unable to abolish this custom, he at least received nothing but articles calculated to enrich his museum. But Pius VI. had a particular affection for presents of intrinsic value; and his example was strictly followed by his nephews, who shared in the liberality of the new cardinals. Cardinal Braschi, already enriched by their gifts, was rendered still more opulent by those of the courtiers, who vied with each other in this mode of celebrating his promotion. The principal Roman families sent him presents very little analogous to his dignity, or even to his uncle's museum. He received from them magnificent carriages with sets of six horses, beautiful services of china, gold boxes, watches set with diamonds, saddle-horses richly caparisoned, and even bank notes very handsomely affixed to cakes of chocolate. The whole amount of these presents was estimated at a hundred thousand Roman crowns.

All this, however, was no more than proofs of *passive* avarice; and cardinal Braschi might say with Célimène:

Puis-je empêcher les gens de me trouver aimable\*?

\* If people think me amiable, how can I help it?

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But he gave that same year a proof of *active* avarice, not quite so easily excused. A certain prior, of the name of *Anteremi*, who possessed an immense and very valuable personal property, left him in his will an undeterminate legacy. He authorised him to select from his property, before any of it was brought to sale, whatever furniture, plate, jewels, and other valuables he might fancy. The cardinal-nephew was not backward in availing himself of this permission, which afforded him so fine an opportunity of furnishing his palace at a small expence. It was in the priory of this singular testator that the pope had built a charming habitation; where the most refined taste disputed the palm with magnificence. Hence it appears, that, with all the semblance of piety and apostolical zeal, Pius VI. was not so exclusively occupied with the interests of heaven, as not to relish the enjoyment of terrestrial vanities; and his nephews, who had more leisure, and were under less restraint, were still less scrupulous. But if these various ways of acquiring treasures, and enjoying life, were any way shameful, they were at least no wise criminal. The same could not be said of what remains to be related of their insatiable avidity.

Would any one believe that about this time duke Braschi bought up all the oil in the ecclesiastical state, without regard to the law which forbade any individual to monopolise an article of the first necessity? The president of *la Grascia*, within whose department it came, was obliged to purchase it of him again, and to raise the price ten per cent. at the expence of the consumer. Would any one believe that at the same time he monopolised corn also, by procuring it at a low price of the country people, and then obtaining an exclusive permission to export it. The weakness of Pius VI. overlooked all these disorders; but they were grievances which the Romans did not forgive him; and when about this time he appeared in public, he was more than once greeted with hisses in return for his benedictions.

But a trait of rapacity still more shameful, a scandalous proof of his blind affection for his nephews, raised indignation to the utmost height. This trait deserves to be given in detail.

There was at Rome in 1783, one Amanzio Lepri, the last male descendant of a Milanese, who had enriched himself in collecting the customs of the ecclesiastical state. He had taken priest's orders, and joined to a weak mind what  
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most commonly accompanies it, a tender conscience. His immense fortune, no doubt, excited some remorse. He thought he should sanctify it; he thought he should do a thing highly agreeable to God by adding to the opulence of his vicar and his family. He waited upon the sovereign pontiff, and presented him with a formal donation of all his patrimony in favour of the beloved nephews of his holiness. Pius VI. was affected by this unexpected generosity, and, quieting his scruples, accepted it with tears in his eyes (he wept without difficulty), lavishing upon the donor the treasure of his benedictions. The worthy Amanzio-Lepri had modestly reserved himself, out of his great fortune, a pension of five hundred crowns a year. Pius VI. was resolved not to be outdone in generosity; and insisted upon that sum being paid him every month. Did the Holy Ghost reveal to him that those payments would soon be at an end?

Amanzio, however, had a young niece of the name of Mary-Anne, who was his ward. His pious liberality had edified only the pontiff and his nephews; and the youthful Mary-Anne soon found defenders. Many distinguished Romans, and even cardinal John Francis Albani, the dean of the Sacred College, espoused her cause. It was at first without success. Her mother, the marchioness Victoria Lepri, had courage enough to commence a suit against the pope, arraigning her silly relative's donation before the auditor of the Apostolical Chamber. This is a place which attaches him who occupies it to the person of the holy father; which renders him the organ of his justice; and which leads to the cardinalate. The auditor rejected the plea of Victoria Lepri; and a cardinal's hat was soon after the reward of his base complaisance.

But the Lepri family were not discouraged. They appealed to the tribunal of the *Rota*, which, amid general corruption, was still renowned for its inflexible equity. Among the many councils, congregations, and tribunals of Rome, this was, perhaps, the only establishment which had preserved all its claims to the public esteem unimpaired. The decisions had, in some sort, the force of law out of the ecclesiastical state. There was no appeal from them, unless a demand of revision; which was presented to the *Rota*, itself, and which it was free to admit or reject. A greater homage could not well be paid to the integrity of a tribunal. That of the *Rota* was composed of twelve judges, who were called

called auditors. Three were Romans, one a native of Bologna, one of Ferrara, one a Venetian, one a Milanese, one German, one Frenchman, and two Spaniards. The five first were paid by the pope; and each of the others by the state to which he belonged. Upon a vacancy happening, the sovereign who was to furnish an auditor presented three or four candidates, out of whom the pope selected one; but his choice generally fell upon the first on the list. The reporter of each cause was one of these twelve auditors of the *Rota*; but had no vote. The cause, after being pleaded by advocates, was first submitted to the judgment of four auditors. It was decided, if three of them were of the same opinion. If there were an equal division, it was discussed anew, but before six auditors. In case of there not being an absolute plurality of voices in this second trial, the cause was brought before the whole tribunal; and then only the reporter voted, if it was necessary for him to do so, in order to divide the suffrages.

Such was the organisation of the tribunal of the *Rota*. Thus composed, most of its members were placed in a sort of independence; which is the best guarantee of the integrity of judges. It is true that the auditors of the *Rota*, who were all prelates, had, even when foreigners, favours to expect from the court of Rome; but they were chosen with care, and seldom deviated from their duty. Their very ambition was interested in their rigid adherence to the laws of probity. When we have constant claims to esteem, we soon also acquire claims to favour. Besides, they could hardly avoid combining information with purity of intention. They were obliged to assign reasons for their opinion, and consequently to study the laws. Shame would have been the slightest expiation of their ignorance. The form of their sentences was simple, and left little hold to chicanery; and every thing concurred to make them at once respected and feared. Accordingly, an Englishman, in other points very little of an enthusiast, who observed them narrowly during the period we are speaking of, thus terminates their panegyric: "Yes, glorious preservers of the ancient Roman jurisprudence, it is with heart-felt satisfaction that I record this public testimony of my esteem and veneration."

It was before this tribunal, dreaded by the Holy See itself, that the cause of the young Mary-Anne Lepri was brought

brought by appeal. Of the four first judges who had to pronounce sentence, three acknowledged the justice of her claims. They had, however, a moment of weakness. Seduced by the pope, they called in two other judges to investigate a cause already legally decided, in order to give the holy father time to bring about an accommodation. By dint of chicane, it was possible to prove that Amanzio had a right to dispose of his inheritance. His grandfather had established a trust of about a million of crowns in favour of Joseph, one of his sons, father of the young lady, with remainder to his heirs male; and in default of such issue, the trust was to revert to his second son John, with the same limitations; and lastly, in case of John dying without male issue, to his third son Amanzio; *still excluding females, as long as the male branch should exist*. It was upon this clause that Pius VI. endeavoured to ground the legality of the donation. But that did not render the spoliation of the ward either the less manifest or the less odious. He was sensible then of the weakness of his plea, and proposed a compromise to the marchioness di Lepri. He offered to pay down two hundred thousand crowns. The marchioness made answer, that even for three hundred thousand she would not suffer her daughter to be deprived of her inheritance. Another expedient was thought of: that was, to marry the young lady to the *major-domo* Onesti, one of the pope's nephews, who was not yet a cardinal. But the legal proceedings went on faster than the negotiation; and, in spite of all intrigues, the *Rota* unanimously pronounced sentence, in the second instance, in favour of Mary-Anne. This happened on the 2d of June 1785. The common people, who have every-where, even at Rome, an innate sentiment of what is just and honest, assembled before the hall of the *Rota*, and to the great chagrin of the holy father, celebrated the triumph of justice by their noisy acclamations.

An incident still more unlucky occurred soon after. Amanzio Lepri died. Count Braschi immediately had the will, that was favourable to his views, read and sealed; but how great was his mortification when the youthful Mary-Anne produced a more recent one, which her uncle had secretly made, and in which he secured to her his fortune, by annulling the donation, made by him in his lifetime, to the pope and his nephews, as having been *extorted* by intrigue. A strange embarrassment for the papal family! But powerful men

men have always the means of setting themselves above the laws. In vain did the public voice exclaim against Pius VI., and in vain did the family of the deceased claim the execution of the sentence of the *Rota*. The pope refused; and did it in that tone of ill-humour and harshness which authority is so apt to assume when it feels itself in the wrong. He seduced the civilians; obtained a revision of the suit; and even found means to shake the integrity of the *Rota*. Several members, more courageous than the rest, persisted in their first opinion. The estimable Acevédo, one of the two auditors of the *Rota* furnished by Spain, while his colleague d'Espuig, afterwards archbishop of Seville, was basely flattering the avarice of the pontiff, nobly supported the cause of the adverse party; and said, that to strip her of her inheritance would be to commit a shameful crime. His opposition was useless. In the course of 1786 the definitive decree was carried to Pius VI. upon a golden plate. It confirmed the donation of the imbecile Amanzio; and condemned to costs of suit the lawful heirs, who were thus reduced to misery and despair.

At this news the public indignation knew no bounds. The pope only suspected it. He was surrounded by flatterers, or weak friends, who feared the debasement of the Holy See, and endeavoured to palliate the iniquity of the pontiff. Pius VI., to excuse himself, said, with apparent frankness, that he wished for nothing but the triumph of justice; but that when that triumph should be once secured, the Lepri family might depend upon his generosity. Foreigners, on the other hand, did not spare him. The court of Tuscany was then engaged in a quarrel with the pope, and rejoiced at the means which he himself employed to diminish his popularity. The news-writer of Florence accompanied his account of the suit, and of its result, with the most cutting reflections, and was not disavowed by his government.

The pope, however, met with more formidable antagonists. The family of Altieri, one of the most considerable in Rome, espoused with warmth the cause of the youthful Mary-Anne. The prince of that name even married her a short time after. The pope was obliged to yield; and the parties came to an accommodation in 1787; by virtue of which the duke of Braschi was to keep all the personals of the rich inheritance, and to continue to enjoy the income of all the real estates for six years.

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Would any one believe, however, that avidity, repenting of the sacrifices extorted from her by some little remains of shame, recurred to new chicanes, in order to re-commence the suit. The *Rota* sullied its reputation of integrity, by lending its agency to this iniquitous transaction. At length in 1789, arbitrators, appointed on both sides, mediated a new accommodation, still more advantageous to nepotism. The whole inheritance was divided into equal shares between the pope's nephews and the real heiress. But the portion of one of the parties was enhanced by the addition of remorse and shame. When we remember this infamous affair, we cannot feel much disposed to pity the nephews of his holiness, so rich a year ago, and at present so wretched; nor can we help believing the truth of the old proverb, which fixes the fate of *ill-gotten wealth*. When the apologists of Pius VI. wish to save the glory of his pontificate, by quoting the restoration of the Appian way, the draining of the Pontine marshes, and the protection he gave to the arts, the way to shut their mouths is to remind them of the Lepri inheritance.

It is certainly the transaction which reflects the greatest dishonour on his reign. But Pius VI. may also be reproached with other instances of avidity, which are equally shameful, though not equally notorious. Has he not been known to avail himself of the most base expedients to enrich his nephews, and draw treasure from the most polluted sources? That celebrated English woman, who by turns diverted Europe by her extravagance, and shocked it by her profligacy; that woman, who carried about the scandal of bigamy from state to state; the duchess of Kingston, in a word, bequeathed to him at her death a picture set round with diamonds. The legacy was valuable. It was worth forty thousand florins. It was supposed that the delicacy of Pius VI. would reject this bequest; but he did not offer such an affront to the *manes* of the illustrious *aventurière*. Nor did he always content himself with accepting in the most unblushing manner: he sometimes grasped at the property of others without a claim, an apparent one at least, and without feeling any remorse of conscience. At the time of the destruction of the Jesuits, all the plate belonging to those of Rome had been seized, and deposited at *Monte di Pietà*. Pius VI. had it brought to him; converted part of it into chandeliers for his favorite abbey at Subiaco; and kept the rest for his own use,



use, or for the caprices of his liberality. The Ex-Jesuits were very much exasperated at this conduct. They alleged that, even after their suppression, they ought at least to retain their moveable property. They had, as it is well known, a very numerous and a very formidable party at Rome. In order to appease them, Pius VI. was obliged to shew them some favour; and consequently gave occasion to new suspicions and new complaints on the part of the catholic powers. It often happens that a single prominent defect leads to very serious faults, and to misfortunes that are not always occasioned even by the most odious vices. The vanity of Pius VI. accounts for almost all his errors, and was the most abundant source of his calamities. He was rapacious, because he was determined to have, at any price, the means of rendering his pontificate brilliant, and of immortalising his name. Hence that oppression, and those immoderate issues of paper money, which, by exciting the discontent of his subjects, facilitated at least, if it did not immediately occasion, his fall.

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## CHAPTER X.

### *Causes of the Overthrow of the Roman Government.*

THE grievances, then, of which the Roman people complained, were but too well founded, and in another country they might have had the most serious consequences. But with such subjects as the Romans, the danger of an insurrection might appear to be remote. Still, more patient than their ancestors in the days of their degeneracy, they could even go without *bread*, provided they were amused with *shows*; and in this respect, modern Rome was still better treated than the Rome of antiquity. What a variety, what a multitude of diversions it afforded to ignorance, frivolity, and sloth! Every day produced a repetition of what passed once in the square of St. Mark at Venice, when a missionary, jealous of the success of the master of a puppet-show, found no other means of calling off the numerous auditory of his rival, than by taking a crucifix from under his

his cassock, and shaking it in the air, crying out : *Eccola, eccola, il vero policinello* † ! At Rome there was a constant struggle between the profane theatres and the churches. The priests were everlastingly in dispute with the mountebanks. The only difference between them is that which exists between dull and entertaining absurdity. Here, a juggler astonished the multitude by his pretended prodigies : there, the crowd was dazzled by the illusions of superstition. Their wondering eyes were now directed to the tricks of a conjurer ; now to a Madonna, whom a fanatic monk ordered to weep : and while men of refined taste paid for and relished the songs of Metastasio, and the melodious accents of Pacsiello, the mob went *gratis* to the opera at St. Peter's church. There was not a single day for *ennui* ; not a moment for mischievous idleness.

And then the union of two powers, in a single hand, was wonderfully calculated to render the abuses of authority supportable. The Romans, superstitious in their nature, saw in their sovereign a double individual ; by turns, ridiculous and sacred, odious and respectable. One day they cursed the prodigal, rapacious, and presumptuous prince ; the next they threw themselves prostrate before the vicar of Jesus Christ ; a procession or a solemn benediction sufficing to make them forget the dearth of provisions. Their vanity was flattered with the idea of having within their walls the source of spiritual grace, the object of the homage of the whole catholic universe. They were dazzled with the pomp, at once religious and profane, which environed the pontiff ; and each of them thought that he partook of his splendor.

This government, vicious as it was, flattered in many respects the passions of the multitude. In that immense hierarchy, which from the most obscure sacristan arose to the pope, they did not see a single rank that they might not attain ; and though there were in Rome certain great families for whom the pope was in a manner obliged to reserve a few cardinals' hats, there was not a single subject of the whole ecclesiastical state who might not aspire to the first dignities of the church, and hope to raise his family to an honourable state. What was the origin of most of the cardinals ? To say nothing of the famous shepherd of Montalto, who,  
in

† Look here, look here, here's the real punch for you !

in the last century, had been seen to rise successively from the lowest condition to the pontifical throne. Was not Ganganelli of the most obscure extraction? And what was Braschi himself? A private gentleman of a distant province.

There were in the Roman government, then, two circumstances which seemed, notwithstanding so many causes of destruction, likely to ensure its duration; two circumstances which have so much influence upon mankind; vanity, and superstition in its most dazzling pomp. The imagination of the vulgar represented it as something supernatural; and their pride thence derived more than one kind of enjoyment. In the ecclesiastical state, thanks to the climate, the natural wants are few, and are easily satisfied. In the capital there was so much food for curiosity, so many resources for idleness, and so few rallying points for the discontented, that an insurrection, organised in a dangerous manner, was next to impossible. Rome was, properly speaking, the metropolis of Europe, the city of artists, amateurs, and foreigners. It would have been in vain to look there for the city of the Romans. Out of its whole population of about a hundred and sixty thousand souls, there were scarcely any natives, except the Transteverines, and the inhabitants of the quarter *dei Monti*; and they were precisely the most rude and the most superstitious part of the populace. Among them, perhaps, might have been found the materials of a revolution: but who, among the other inhabitants of Rome, was interested in bringing one about? Was it the artists, who are naturally the friends of peace? The foreigners, who came to Rome in search of information or pleasure? The numerous ecclesiastics of every rank, who had all their career of ambition to run? The prelates, who might become cardinals? Or the cardinals, each of whom looked to the possibility of his attaining the papacy, and all of whom enjoyed a degree of consideration that any revolution might have endangered? Every interest then concurred, if not to inspire a love, at least to counsel an endurance, of an order of things in which the existence of all was implicated. It may also be said, that the reign of a Roman pontiff, whatever he might be, must have appeared tolerable on other accounts. It was generally of short duration, and consequently left a door always open to hope. Men are naturally inclined to be patient, when they are every day upon the eve of a change  
exempt

exempt from convulsion. Besides, the reign of the popes was seldom signalised by scandalous disorders, or by intolerable acts of oppression. Their age, the life they must naturally have led before they rose to supreme power, their habit of throwing a veil over their excesses, whenever they indulged in any; every thing, in short, contributed to divert them from those acts of violence which irritate a whole nation, and produce an unanimous outcry of indignation: and Pius VI., notwithstanding his defects, was not an exception to the general rule. He has given occasion, no doubt, to bitter complaints; but he is not reproached with those acts of despotism which engender rebellions, especially among a people little energetic, and occupied with its pious mummeries, and with its amusements. He found the government accustomed to mild measures; and he did not render it more severe. The agents of that government were often untrue to their trusts; but in their manners there was nothing repulsive. The nation certainly was not in a state of prosperity: it was wasting away in a deep decline; but it was a stranger to the pangs of acute disorders. It cannot be denied that justice was administered with partiality; but its dispensations were never severe. The laws were bad, or fallen into contempt; but they were not rigorous. The finances were in the greatest disorder. The taxes, by which the people almost always estimate their felicity, were comparatively light. Accordingly, a few years before the French revolution, at the time when the palpable errors of pope Braschi's reign began to strike every eye, his subjects used to say to travellers, even in the most remote provinces of the ecclesiastical state, in those that were the most distant from that splendor which dazzles the multitude, and makes them forget their misfortunes: "Yes, the mildness of our government makes us love it, defective as it is, and ridiculous as it may appear; and we should dread the consequences of a change. If we had a secular government, agriculture and the arts, perhaps, would flourish more; but we should have burdensome taxes; we should be a prey to extortion. Only see how the people in the duchies of Modena and Parma are oppressed! No: none but the enemies of the public welfare can desire a change; for nowhere is there greater comfort. We are, it is true, subject to the caprices of a government which often changes; which is without any fixed plan as to the ex-  
" portation

“ portation of commodities ; and which sometimes favours  
 “ and sometimes fetters it. But where is the administra-  
 “ tion without its defects ? Where are the agents who may  
 “ not be reproached with some abuse of power † ? ”

Elsewhere, judges, less indulgent, blamed the administration of Pius VI. ; but still spoke handsomely of the Roman government. The present pope, said they, has carried the abuse, to which the people is most sensible, to greater lengths than his predecessors. The monopoly of corn, of oil, and of meat, is become more grievous than ever. We experience dearths, and sometimes a real scarcity ; but at least we have no wars, of which we are bound to bear the burden : nor have we any occasion for extraordinary expenses. The pope is covetous, it is true ; but he does not hoard up his money ; neither has he any interest in countenancing acts of oppression. Our laws are not sufficiently coercive ; and our tribunals are neither severe, nor even vigilant. Hence results a very bad police, and the impunity of crimes. But what inconveniences do we suffer that are not fully compensated by the happiness of never having threats or violence hanging over our heads ?

We do not pretend to prove by this that the Roman government was entirely contrary to the maxims of sound philosophy, or even to the dictates of reason alone. We only mean to say, that, if it had within it the elements of a slow, but inevitable destruction, it did not as yet excite, even under the reign of Pius VI., that violent discontent which provokes the people to a revolution.

It is then elsewhere, it is without that we must look for the principal causes of it ; and we shall find them much less in the endeavours of heretics, poets, and atheists, to undermine the pontifical throne, than in the conduct of the catholic powers in regard to the Holy See. Dupaty, in his letters concerning Italy, in which we meet with so many truths, expressed with so much ingenuity, that at first sight they wear the appearance of paradoxes : Dupaty says, “ the ecclesiastical state was never so stable, as since it is so  
 “ weak. Henceforth it has nothing to fear ; for henceforth  
 “ it is no longer to be feared.”—It wished to become powerful again ; and did not know how to accommodate itself to circumstances. It endeavoured to make a shew of strength, and it fell to the ground.

This will be more fully explained in the following chapters  
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† See Roland, *Lettres écrites de Suisse et d'Italie*, tom. v. p. 515.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Disputes of the Holy See with the Court of Vienna.*

AS long as Maria Theresa lived, the court of Vienna preserved an appearance of regard and respect for the Holy See. That princess, so great in several points of view, had, especially towards the latter end of her life, contracted her mind in the swaddling-clothes of devotion. She had long considered the Jesuits as the principal support of religion. Other courts, the rivals of her's in impiety, had heavy causes of complaint against them, and solicited their destruction. Maria Theresa thought she made a great effort in not opposing it; and died, perhaps, regretting the society of Jesus.

The throne, which she left vacant, was then occupied by an enterprising prince, fertile in projects of reform. Joseph II., in spite of whatever ill-humour and envy may have said, was a man of sense and information, who wanted nothing but moderation and prudence to qualify him for the execution of great designs. He had long meditated under the guardianship of an imperious mother, far less philosophical than himself, vast plans, the execution of which his impatience impelled him to hasten. Because he had long resolved them in his mind, he thought he had matured them; or rather, judging the rest of Europe, and his subjects, by himself, he thought that every thing was ripe for his projects.

Scarcely had he begun his reign, when the respect of the court of Vienna for the Holy See perceptibly diminished, as had been foreseen. It is true that Pius VI. was so ill-advised to provoke this sudden change. His greatest embarrassment was to reconcile the different marks of attention which he wished to shew to the great powers, when they had opposite views. It was often impossible for him to yield to the demands of one, without displeasing the rest.

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He then had recourse to those *mezzo-termini*, which seldom fail to excite as much discontent in him to whom we yield, as in him whom we resist. He had found himself in this unpleasant dilemma towards the end of the reign of Maria Theresa.

Pious as she was, that princess carried all the weaknesses of maternal vanity to the highest pitch; and to gratify them, even her religious scruples were for some time laid aside. The archduke Maximilian, one of her sons, had embraced the ecclesiastical profession. It was not enough for her to have secured to him the electorate of Cologne; she wished also to add to it the bishopric of Munster, and several others. If the empress-queen had been left to herself, the house of Austria would in time have invaded all the rich prelatures in Germany, one after the other. The two courts of Versailles and Madrin took umbrage at it; and the king of Prussia expressed his displeasure. He even held out threats to the canons of Munster. But it was at Rome, that under a pontiff less easily intimidated, and, above all, less easily seduced, the evil might have been crushed at its birth. France and Spain urged Pius VI. to refuse the archduke the briefs of eligibility. They wished him to oppose to the demands of the court of Vienna the holy canons, which forbade the plurality of benefices. It was thus that those great powers, which gave such frequent shocks to the authority of the Holy See, invoked it when it tended to favour their views. Pius VI. was in the greatest perplexity. He did not dare too openly to thwart the court of Vienna. Why did not the other courts, which were able to contend with equal arms, undertake the troublesome task? At the bottom of his heart he was not sorry to see the great powers engaged in a dispute. He was sensible, that if it be true, that the little have suffered by the follies of the great, it is not less true that the weak profit by their quarrels. But the weak do not always know how to avail themselves of the advantages afforded them by circumstances. The pope, wishing at once to keep well both with the house of Bourbon and the house of Austria, gave cause of complaint to one, without securing the gratitude of the other.

The latter received from him at first a proof of condescension. He began by granting a dispensation to the archduke Maximilian, to enable him to take holy orders before he accepted the co-adjutorship of the archbishopric of Co-

logne, and of the bishopric of Munster. He had, however, courage enough to annex a condition to this favour. It was, that the archduke should be applied for as co-adjutor by the elector himself; and that he should procure himself a majority of votes in the two chapters; a vain formality, which the cabinet of Vienna was sure to fulfil with ease. This act of apparent firmness did not prevent the cabinets of Versailles and Madrid from being much displeased with his complaisance; but the former, where the queen was all-powerful, was silent. The minister of Spain spoke with that energy which was consistent with his character, and conformable to his instructions. Pius VI. who feared him, hesitated for some time; but the court of Vienna lavished compliments upon the pontiff, and presents upon his nephews and all the papal ministry, without even forgetting the lowest officers in the chancery. The court of Vienna gained the day.

These were the last friendly transactions between it and the Holy See. The death of Maria Theresa followed close after this little triumph; and from that moment it was foreseen that the time of conciliatory measures was past. Pius VI. was sensible of this. He was acquainted with the character and principles of Joseph II.; and he appeared to make it his business to accelerate the moment of rigour. This is one example of that inconsistency which often appeared during this pontificate.

It was a custom established at Rome, that the Pope should pay funeral honours in his chapel to the catholic sovereigns who were lately dead. Is it credible that Pius VI. refused this vain homage to the memory of Maria Theresa? He had just derogated from the holy canons in favour of that princess; and yet he would not derogate, on her account, from a usage of no consequence in itself, and equally unconnected with divine worship, and with the discipline of the church. He persisted in maintaining that such honours were never paid to queens: he affected to be ignorant that Maria Theresa, who had reigned twenty years alone, ought to be assimilated to other sovereigns. Besides, of what consequence was this derogation from custom, compared with the giving of offence to a prince whose favour it was so much his interest to conciliate!

Joseph II. had, in his turn, the weakness to be offended at this paltry shift; while Pius VI., deceiving all the calculations



culations of those who thought they knew him, and rejecting the prudent counsels of his real friends, piqued himself upon braving the resentment of the emperor. When cardinal Herzan, the Imperial minister, endeavoured to point out to him the inconveniences that might result from his incivility—*Well!* replied the pope in a passion, *I do not care whether the emperor be angry with this business, or whether he hold it in contempt.* Joseph II. adopted the former part of the alternative; and when he signed a dispatch, addressed by his chancery to the Imperial minister at the papal court, he added in his own hand-writing: *It is of little consequence to me whether the bishop of Rome be polite or uncivil;* and he thought himself completely revenged.

But this was not the only affront which he reserved for the pope. The plan of Joseph II. was, no doubt, formed, when he ascended the throne of Maria Theresa; and, in all probability, no change would have been effected in it by a funeral oration delivered by the pope. But the very trifling incident of its omission had an immediate influence upon the manner of putting it into execution; and it was observed, that the emperor, while acting upon his great philosophical principles, enjoyed the uneasiness that he was about to give to the sovereign pontiff.

As early as the beginning of the year 1781, he spoke of introducing the maxims of the Gallican church into his dominions, of abolishing the plurality of benefices, and of granting greater liberty to the press. He ordered a statement to be drawn up of all the ecclesiastical revenues of the Milanese, and of the state of Mantua. This was bringing the subject of alarm close home to the Holy Sec. Joseph II. intermingled some traits of puerile animosity with the notification of these dreadful measures. He was in hopes of vexing Pius VI. by taking a confessor from among the Ex-jesuits. He was not then as yet acquainted with his secret sentiments.

Soon after, he proceeded from words and preliminary measures to very serious reforms. In that very year he issued two edicts, subjecting to very troublesome rules the admission of briefs, bulls, and rescripts, of the court of Rome. By another, he declared that in future the monastic orders should not be exempt from the authority of the bishops; and that the pope should no longer have immediate jurisdiction over them. Pius VI. had at first sufficient self-

command to repress the anger he felt at these innovations. He wished, he said, to confine himself to paternal representations. But he received, from all quarters, complaints to which it was necessary to attend. Rules of conduct were requested of him; and he thought he could not do otherwise than give them, when in fact he stood in need of them himself. A panic seized upon the whole ecclesiastical army; and ran from rank to rank to the commander in chief. The monks trembled in their cells. Their provincials consulted the generals of orders who resided at Rome. The latter addressed themselves to the pope. They agreed with him that it was necessary to make head against the storm; and, in pursuance of his advice, wrote thus to the subordinate chiefs: *Be mindful of the constitutions of your order, and of your duty.* The armies were in presence of each other: the war was about to begin, without being declared.

Joseph II. continued his reforms. He reduced the fees of christenings and burials to one half. Pius VI. resolved to try the effect of his paternal remonstrances. The emperor answered drily to his nuncio: *I want no advice concerning the affairs of my own dominions; which regard only my own subjects, nor concerning matters which are merely of a temporal nature.*

All that Joseph II. has since said, all that he has since done relative to reforms in the discipline of the church, has been merely a commentary upon, or an application of, this phrase. We shall indicate only the principal ones; all the rest, with their tedious details, should be abandoned to theologians and canonists.

The Jesuits, the constant, zealous, and artful supporters of the Holy See, which had good reason to regret them, had inserted in the ritual the principal clauses of the two famous bulls, *In cœna Domini* and *Unigenitus*. This was a mean of keeping the eyes of the faithful constantly fixed upon the prerogatives of the court of Rome, of holding them up as essential parts of divine worship, and of obtaining from pious sovereigns a kind of tacit acknowledgment of its pretensions. Joseph II. expunged these dangerous interpolations from all the rituals in his dominions.

He declared all the seminaries, and colleges of the missionaries, independent of the court of Rome.

These

These were only distant attacks made upon his authority. They were followed by a more serious one, which was calculated to have an immediate effect; and upon which it was necessary to come to some resolution without delay. The emperor wrote to Pius VI. to request an indult, authorising him to present to all the bishoprics, and to sell the benefices of Lombardy. The embarrassment of the pope was great. Was it best to adopt vigorous measures, at the risk of provoking a schism? Or was it wiser to dissemble? That would be to dishonour his pontificate, and to draw upon himself the reproaches of the whole Catholic church. Already did the priests about his person blame his supineness, and endeavour to inflame his zeal. He was tempted to suspend the drawing up of all bulls for the hereditary dominions of the emperor; but some persons, who were better advised, observed to him, that Joseph II. was a man capable of dispensing with any thing that was not granted with a good grace. Complain in secret, said they, at the foot of the crucifix, of the pretensions which the emperor sets up. Take what are called conservatory measures; but have a care how you proceed to refusals. Have you forgot the famous expression of Benedict XIV., your first protector, who said, when speaking of temporal sovereigns, *Do not let us discourage their making applications to us.*

But it was hard, it was disgraceful, to yield without resistance. Well, let us resist then, said Pius VI. but with the arms of mildness and of Christian charity. He replied then to the demand of an indult, by a respectful letter, in which he endeavoured to soften Joseph II. by flattering his vanity. I know very well, said he, that I shall obtain nothing; but it is always important to gain time.

The pope might be considered at that time as an object of pity. Almost all the sovereigns of Europe seemed to have conspired to torment him. France was almost the only one that gave him no cause of complaint, which added still more to the ascendancy of the cardinal de Bernis, and gave him an opportunity of speaking, at least with some transient success, the language which was most familiar to him, that of conciliation and peace. He employed it in order to soothe the pontiff's extreme irritation at the Imperial decree, which forbade any one to apply for dispensations to the court of Rome; and at another decree that appeared shortly after, obliging all the bishops in the hereditary dominions to promise

promise that they would obey every order which had already been issued by the emperor, or *which he might issue hereafter*. This decree was not unlike that of the Spanish inquisition, which proscribed *all* the works of Voltaire, as well those which he had already composed, as *those which he might compose in future*. It may easily be conceived that such an injunction must appear at once scandalous and alarming to the Holy See, and to all its partisans. But what was to be done? Was it by resignation, or by resistance, that the Roman Catholic church could be saved from the calamities by which it was threatened? Pius VI. waited with extreme anxiety for the answer of Joseph II., relative to the indult. What cardinal Herzan said to him beforehand, augured no good: "If your holiness does not grant what the emperor asks, you may be assured that he will present to all the benefices in Lombardy without your consent." Joseph's answer arrived shortly after. It was affectionate, but energetic, and did not leave room for the smallest hope of a compromise. He was sincerely desirous of the holy father's consent; but he did not think it at all necessary. His determination was irrevocable. He was resolved to re-establish the sovereign authority, which the weakness of his predecessors had suffered to be infringed.

The pontiff grieved; deliberated; and was about to submit. Hitherto he had shewn himself fiery in the extreme. His best friends no longer knew him: his phlegm and patience appeared to them supernatural. They found him disposed to grant the fatal indult, provided Joseph would promise to make no farther innovations.

Pius VI. was not yet acquainted with the emperor. He had seen him develop only a part of his vast plan. While he thought himself at the end of his sorrows and sacrifices, a new Imperial decree appeared, suppressing all the monasteries, of which the monks, being merely contemplative, were neither useful as instructors of youth, as missionaries, nor as preachers. It also threw open all the convents of nuns, except those who were engaged in the useful work of education.

These were no small triumphs to sound philosophy. They were thunder-bolts to the court of Rome. They provoked a resolution which was not expected in France, and which took the cardinal de Bernis himself unprovided.

Pius

Pius VI. imagined, that if there were any means of converting the emperor, it was to go and visit him in person at Vienna. The only persons to whom he had intrusted the secret of this strange project, were John Francis Albani, dean of the Sacred College, a man of abilities and influence, to whom it was necessary to shew some deference, cardinal Gerdyl, the pope's privy counsellor in every thing relative to theology, and cardinal Pallavicini, on whom he bestowed neither confidence nor friendship; but who, as secretary of state, naturally had a right to be intrusted with the project.

It was the court of Vienna which sent the first advice of it to that of Versailles. The latter thought the idea extravagant, and calculated to bring the Catholic religion and the head of the church into contempt. As to the cardinal de Bernis, he obstinately refused to believe it; and the measure was already announced at Vienna, when cardinal Conti, secretary of briefs, told the ministers of France and Spain that he intended to ask the pope's permission to communicate to them *a very great piece of news*. Bernis and the chevalier Azara knew not for some time what to conjecture. Of all the projects which the pope could have conceived, that of a journey to Vienna appeared the least probable. Their surprise was extreme when they were made acquainted with the brief which Pius VI. had addressed to the emperor, to announce to him that he was determined to pay him a visit, in order to settle in person the points on which they were at variance; and that neither his age, nor the length of the journey should deter him from taking a step which could not fail, he hoped, to re-establish good harmony between them.

This brief had been delivered to Joseph II. by the nuncio Garampi; and its contents were at first to be kept secret. As soon as it was divulged at Vienna, through the indiscretion of the Venetian ambassador, it became the subject of the most malignant reflections. No one would ever have expected the haughty Vatican to take so humiliating a step. What a triumph for the emperor's vanity! What a mortification for the Holy See! At Rome the same language was held by all ranks of men. They could not pardon the pope's friends for having given him such base advice. What more could the enemies of his repose and glory have done!

The

The emperor himself was far from expecting such a resolution on the part of the pope; but he dissembled his astonishment. Endeavours were made to alarm him, by observing to him that the presence of the sovereign pontiff might heat the minds of fanatics, and oppose dangerous obstacles to the useful reforms he had undertaken. He contemned such empty terrors. He was accustomed to brave dangers; and those appeared to him no wise formidable. He therefore sent an affectionate answer to Pius VI., in which, after having started some obliging objections relative to his health, he applauded his intention. He acknowledged that nothing was more likely to bring two princes, who had any dispute to settle, to a good understanding, than a personal interview.

Some people did Pius VI. the honour to believe that his proposal of going to Vienna was no more than an empty demonstration, from which he had expected a good effect; that he was in hopes it would be taken as a striking proof of his apostolical zeal; and that he would be compared to the good shepherd in the gospel, who went in search of his lost sheep; but that he depended on the emperor's not taking him at his word. Those who knew Pius VI. well, thought him perfectly incapable of such a calculation. The truth was, that, depending much upon his eloquence, and upon his other means of seduction, he flattered himself that he should not meet with a personal refusal from the emperor; that his presence would awaken the zeal of the German bishops; and that his triumph would be infallible. Joseph II. thought otherwise, and was justified by the event. It is well known, that even before the departure of Pius VI. that prince expressed himself thus: "If the pope comes only in hopes of obtaining from me the slightest change in the system I have adopted in ecclesiastical affairs, he may spare himself the trouble of so long a journey."

Several months still passed between the acknowledgment required by Joseph II. and the departure of Pius VI., and that time was spent in intrigues, conjectures, and attempts to shake his resolution. It was exceedingly unpleasant to the eldest of his nephews. The pope, in his opinion, was exposing himself to everlasting ridicule; and then, reverting to himself, he saw his fortune endangered, in case his uncle should happen to die upon the road. What was to become of those brilliant enterprises that did so much honour to

to his pontificate? Yes, cried he mournfully, the pope is guided by perfidious counsels. His enemies wish to kill him with chagrin and shame.

Bernis, who sincerely interested himself in his glory and peace, hoped that it was still time to dissuade him; and, without taking offence at his reserve, which did not so much indicate a want of confidence as the dread with which he was inspired by the austerity of his advice, addressed to him a pressing letter to the following effect:

“Every body is of opinion that you are about to take an improper step, which, without being of the smallest advantage to the Holy See, will be a disgrace to the pontifical dignity. Even at Rome, it is already turned into ridicule. Now you know with what effect that weapon is used against religion and its ministers. Those who are about your person dare not oppose your wishes. They are ill acquainted with the spirit of courts, and the spirit of the age. For heaven’s sake then, holy father, suspend the execution of your project, till you know the sentiments of the courts of France and Spain, and of such others whose opinion ought to have any weight with you, &c.”

This lesson, although a little severe, was well received; for Pius VI., in spite of his habitual obstinacy, was not offended with remonstrances, which he was convinced were made with a good intention; but his flatterers gained the day; and among those there were probably some ambitious priests, who were in hopes that the pontiff’s chagrin would soon occasion a vacancy in the Holy See. They were not as yet acquainted with that happy impassibility, which kept him in an excellent state of health in the midst of storms, and has since enabled him to survive the greatest calamities. Pius VI., however, was pleased to enter into a sort of discussion with the cardinal de Bernis. His great argument was, that he had made a promise to the emperor, who had taken him at his word. He quoted with much complacency the affectionate expressions of that prince.—“But you see,” replied his sincere friends, “that the emperor tells you beforehand, that nothing is capable of making him change his determination. Why then should you take so degrading a step to no purpose?”

This reflection made him hesitate for some time. To satisfy his mind completely, he came to the resolution of consulting

consulting seven cardinals separately. They all gave their opinion in writing, and unknown to each other; and all of them voted for the journey to Vienna. This unanimity appeared to the superstitious pontiff to be altogether supernatural. Thus it was that formerly the version of the Septuagint was dictated by the Holy Ghost itself. A single cardinal had, however, been of opinion, that it might, *perhaps*, be worth while to consult the catholic courts. But the pope pretended that the delay which would result from following this single opinion would *irritate the emperor*; and besides, that the catholic courts might be afraid of involving themselves in some difficulty with that prince. He had, in his own opinion, irrefutable answers to all objections. Did any one speak to him of the dangers he might incur, or at least of the affronts to which he was going to expose himself, he replied with an air of ingenuous zeal, that might have been interesting if the desire of acquiring celebrity by so striking a measure, and of exhibiting his person, had not been uppermost among the motives of his conduct; he replied: "I am going to Vienna, as I would go to martyrdom. For the interest of religion, we ought to expose even our lives. We are not at liberty to abandon the vessel of the church in the most violent storms." When any one pointed to him the raillery of which he was sure to be the object: "It matters little," said he, "whether the Imperial ministers turn me into ridicule: their sentiments are well known (this was particularly pointed at M. de Kaunitz). Do we not know that we are bound to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ?"

This latter fear was principally excited by his ostentatious devotion, which afforded ample scope to ridicule; by his want of knowledge of the customs of the world, and by ignorance of every thing that did not immediately relate to ecclesiastical affairs. The persons who were to attend him on his journey were by no means calculated to guard him against the commission of follies and faults. He took with him the abbe Ponzetti, his confessor, a spy of the society of the Jesuits, who was infected with extravagant principles, and who had wit enough to make him dangerous; a patriarch Marucci, and an archbishop Contessini, both of them strongly tinctured with Jesuitism, as well as the rest of his retinue; and to render the absurdity complete, the prelate Dini, his master of the ceremonies, the man who had insisted the  
most



most strenuously upon denying funeral honours to Maria Theresa, was likewise of the party.

The pope concluded his reply to the cardinal de Bernis, by telling him that he was going as soon as possible to pay a visit to the emperor, according to the promise he had lately made.

Bernis was not discouraged. He combated the resolution of Pius VI. with new remonstrances. "Do not confide solely in those whom you have consulted. There are in the sacred college others capable of giving you advice. Those even, by whose apparent opinion you regulate your conduct, hold a very different language when they are not in your presence. Besides, are theologians good judges of decorum and political propriety? Rely rather upon those who have some knowledge of the world and of courts. Your nuncio at Vienna is in a difficult situation; and it is natural that he should wish you to come to his assistance. You are going to give the signal of a paper war, to give birth to a discussion which the very interest of religion requires you to avoid. Does not the true welfare of the church consist in peace and concord?" The cardinal de Bernis concluded this affecting note by a phrase suitable to his profession: *Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.*

But the resolution of Pius VI. was taken, and nothing could move him. When his determination appeared irrevocable, his sincere friends, who were not numerous, expressed their opinion of it to the following effect: "A particular kind of enthusiasm, a fondness for extraordinary things, a mistaken zeal, a little too much vanity and presumption, bad advice given for the most part with an evil intention, and a complete ignorance of the world and of courts, have prevailed over good sense, friendship, and the true interests of the church and of the Holy See. God is not obliged to counteract by miracles the imprudence of his vicars."

Till the last moment his friends were in hopes that the projected journey would not take place; that by some pretext, either on one side or the other, this singular interview would be eluded; but each party thought himself bound by his word. Every thing, even to his religious scruples, confirmed the pope in his resolution; for he knew that Joseph had said to Garampi, the nuncio, "His holiness is obliged

to

“ to come and confer with me, if he does not wish to forfeit his word, and to devote himself to ridicule and reprobation.”

Pius VI. therefore made very serious preparations for his journey. It was his first intention to travel *incognito*, under the name of *Bishop of St. John of Lateran*, to alight at Vienna at the palace of his nuncio, and thence to repair to the castle of Schoenbrun, where apartments were to be provided for him. But Joseph II., under an appearance of religious respect for the head of the church, was not sorry to add every circumstance of parade to the homage that was about to be paid him. He insisted that the pontiff should lodge in his palace at Vienna ; and ordered an apartment, superbly furnished, to be prepared for his reception. In the oratory, which he intended for his use, he had a magnificent altar erected, and took care to lay upon it holy relics, and a crucifix of great value ; the very crucifix which was said to have spoken to one of his predecessors, Ferdinand II. The emperor wished to flatter the pope's devotion, and at the same time to evince his own.

On the 25th day of February, Pius VI held a consistory, in which, among other regulations, he settled that the reins of government should, during his absence, be committed to the hands of the cardinal-vicar Colonna. Foreseeing the possibility of his dying before his return, he annulled the bull, *Ubi papa, ibi Roma* ; and ordered by a brief, that the conclave for the choice of his successor should be held at Rome, even if he should happen to die in any distant part. The health of cardinal Pallavicini, the secretary of state, being at that time precarious, he nominated, in a sealed note, the person who was to succeed him in case of his demise.

After the cares required by the church, those due to affection occupied his mind. He sent for his nephew, count Onesti, and delivered to him his last will. “ If I die during my journey,” said he, “ you will here find my final intentions. Remember me in your prayers. Farewell !” —The nephew seemed much affected ; and the pope, who wept in circumstances less moving, turned aside to hide his tears.

The holy apostles were not to be forgotten on the eve of so important a measure. On the 26th of February, during the silence of the night, Pius VI. descended to their tombs, under

under the principal altar of St. Peter's church, piously implored their assistance, and performed divine worship. With such preparations, he could not fail to have a prosperous journey.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### *The Pope's Journey to Vienna.*

THE following day was fixed for the departure of Pius VI. Early in the morning he repaired to the Vatican; offered up his prayers to the deity; afterwards went to St. Peter's; there heard mass; and then retired to that pompous sacristy, built and decorated, by his orders, at such great expense. It was there that he took leave of the heirs to the throne of Russia, of the count and countess du Nord, who, a few days before, had returned from Naples. They made him a present of a superb *pelisse*, and attended him to his carriage. Pius VI. seemed very sensible of these delicate marks of attention shewn to him by a schismatic prince and princess, at a time, when he had so little reason to be satisfied with the court of Naples, and the grand duke of Tuscany, and when he was setting off on a journey undertaken in order to mollify the rigour of the first catholic monarch in Europe. At length he got into his carriage, in the presence of an immense crowd, who with loud cries implored his last benediction. The most noisy acclamations accompanied him through all the streets of Rome, and to the end of the first stage. He might at that time have mistaken the sentiments with which he inspired his subjects. The good wishes that he carried away with him seemed ardent, sincere, and unanimous; but who does not know the nature of the populace, and especially of the populace of Rome?

Among the preparations for the journey, nothing was forgotten that might serve for the personal decoration of the sovereign pontiff, or exhibit his munificence. He took with

with him the tiara, and two croſiers magnificently ornamented, which were generally depoſited at the caſtle of St. Angelo ; for it was his intention to diſplay at Vienna all the pomp of the pontifical dignity. He was provident enough to take with him alſo four cardinals' hats, deſtined for the German prelates whom he purpoſed to inveſt with the Roman purple. He ordered a thouſand gold medals to be ſtruck, each worth fifteen crowns, and bearing on one ſide a representation of the holy apoſtles, and on the other his own portrait. Theſe he diſtributed on the road. Eighty thouſand Roman crowns were ſet apart to defray the expenſes of the whole journey.

All this parade might dazzle fools, but it did not diminiſh the humiliation attendant upon the ſtep taken by the pope. How unlike was Pius VI. to that pontiff who ſet the Imperial crown upon the head of Charlemagne ; to the arrogant Gregory VII., who left the excommunicated emperor Henry IV. ſuppliant, and expoſed to the inclemency of the weather for ſeveral nights, in the ditch of the caſtle of Canoſſa ; and to the fiery Innocent IV., proſcribing Frederic II., releaſing his ſubjects from the oath of fidelity, and ſucceſsfully oppoſing the thunder of the Vatican to the triumph of that warlike prince. Pius VI. was far from being that imperious, that outrageous fanatic ; but he was expiating the inſolence of his predeceſſors ; while Joſeph II., under an appearance of urbanity, was avenging the affronts that had been offered to his.

Pius VI. conſidered his journey as a mere proof of his apoſtolic zeal ; and feaſted his vanity upon the homage he was about to receive in the courſe of his long route.

Before he quitted Rome he performed a laſt act of devotion. He ſtopped at the door of the fathers of the oratory of Santa Maria di Vellicella, offered up a prayer, ſtepped again into his carriage, and finally departed by the gate called *La porta del popolo*.

The principal noblemen of Rome, accompanied him as far as Otricoli, a ſmall town, ſince rendered famous by our victories over the Neapolitans. It was there that his nephew, the prelate Braſchi, and the governor of Rome took leave of him. Wiſhing to give the Ruſſian prince and princeſs a laſt proof of kindneſs, and, though abſent, to do the honours of his capital, he ſent orders from Otricoli to entertain them

them with an illumination of St. Peter's church, and an exhibition of fire-works in the castle of St. Angelo.

On the third day he arrived at Tolentino, at that place, where, fourteen years afterwards, he was for some short time to preserve his throne by painful sacrifices. It is there that rest the bones of a saint held in high veneration in the country, and known to the devout of Europe by the name of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. A warlike prince, when he travels, visits fortresses and celebrated camps. A philosophical prince goes to observe, and to encourage useful public establishments. The travels of a pope are one continual pilgrimage, excepting, indeed, the customary penance and privations. Pius VI. went every where to worship bones, to celebrate miracles, to offer up prayers, to bestow benedictions, to hold out his slipper to be kissed by a few privileged persons, and his hand by every body; and this is what will be called an apostolical journey.

His route led him to our Lady of Loretto. He made a pause before the sacred image; admired the brilliant offerings with which ostentatious devotion had enriched it, and added to them his own. Every where the devout and the curious crowded round him; every where the prelates and dignitaries of the court of Rome hastened from all quarters to swell his retinue; and every where the pontiff, surrounded by glory, distributed his benedictions with no sparing hand.

In his way to Cesena, his native place, he was obliged to pass that river which is so famous in the history of the Roman republic. The sight of it awakened ideas, which flattery did not fail to turn to account. Formerly, said his adulators, Cæsar passed the Rubicon to make war upon Rome: the pope is now passing it to offer peace to Cæsar. This comparison would have sufficed to console the vanity of Pius VI.; but as yet it did not stand in need of consolation.

At Cesena, he found himself surrounded by his family of both sexes, and of all ages. The severe *étiquette*, which constantly insulates the sovereign pontiff, was laid aside; and men, women, and children, were admitted to his table. He appeared to be much moved by this assemblage; but he was, perhaps, still more sensibly affected, upon perceiving the arrival of count Zambeccari, one of the forty senators

senators of Bologna, appointed minister plenipotentiary by the king of Spain, to compliment him on his journey.

Charles III. wrote to him with his own hand: "I envy the emperor," said he, "the happiness which he is about to derive from your company at Vienna. I should desire nothing so much as to enjoy the like." Such is the language of courts. It is well known that the ridiculous journey of the pope was not less disapproved of at Madrid than at Versailles; but Charles III. was not undeserving of the title of catholic king, and felt *his royal heart* much interested in the honour of the Holy See.

On his arrival at Imola the following morning (the 8th of March), Pius VI. received the homage of another crowned head. The king of Sardinia sent several noblemen of his court to compliment him. The next day, the pious duke of Parma came to perform the same duty in person. He kissed the pontiff's hand and slipper, and returned contented.

The pope found at Ferrara one of the emperor's life-guards, who was come from Vienna to meet him. The day after his departure from Rome, the emperor's answer, which he did not choose to wait for, had arrived: it was as affectionate as the first; but it deprived him, nevertheless, of the hope of effecting any change in the emperor's plans. Many persons regretted that he had not deferred his departure for four and twenty hours, thinking that this answer would, perhaps, have cured him. They were but little acquainted with Pius VI. Obstinate and presumptuous, he could see nothing in the emperor's letter but what was calculated to flatter his vanity. Joseph, after repeating that he was immovably fixed in his resolutions, added the following words: — *I expect your visit; but I beg you to accept the use of my palace, which will be much more convenient both for you and for me; since, as we shall have a great many things to discuss together, we must not let the prying public have the malicious pleasure of counting the number of our interviews.*

Joseph had hoped that Pius VI. would divine his secret intentions. But when he heard that he had taken his letter in the literal sense, and that he was set off from Rome, his whole thoughts were occupied in preparing for him the most dazzling reception. The courier whom he dispatched, had orders not to stop till he met him. The letters which he delivered to the pope announced that the emperor had fitted up an apartment for him in his residence at Vienna,

enna, which was the very same that had been occupied by the late empress, and that he might expect a reception worthy of his supreme rank. Pius VI. could not conceal his satisfaction. He enjoyed, by anticipation, the tributes of respect and love with which he was about to be overwhelmed. After quitting Ferrara, and arriving upon the banks of the Po, he found the bucentaur, which the senate of Venice had ordered to be prepared for his accommodation, and an immense crowd waiting for him by the side of the river. In this manner he was conducted to the place where the Adige falls into the Po ; and thence to the island of Chiozza, where he was complimented by the Venetian prelates, the doge, and the senate, represented by the two procurators of St. Mark, who accompanied him to the frontiers of the Venetian state. The Sacred College was much afraid lest Pius VI., led away by a thirst of honours, should be tempted to appear in the capital of the republic. According to the cardinals, the Venetians did not deserve such an attention on the part of the sovereign pontiff. For a long time past they had shewn very little respect to the Holy See ; and it was they who had set the emperor examples which he had but too well followed.

For this once Pius VI. spared the Sacred College that additional vexation. He contented himself with travelling through the whole Venetian state, leaving Venice very near him upon his right. When he arrived at the canals of the lake, from whence there is a prospect of the *queen of the seas*, he found a great number of boats and gondolas, which scarcely left room for the richly decorated vessels on board of which he was received. At the sight of him the whole crowd fell prostrate, and craved and obtained his benediction. The women wept with joy, and all the neighbouring trees bent beneath the weight of curious spectators. At length he disembarked at Malgara, and found the steps of the landing-place covered with a rich carpet. The bishop of Treviso was waiting for him at the top of them, and conducted him to Mestre, where he was received by all the great personages of the environs, by the ambassadors of Spain and Austria, and by his own nuncio, all come from Venice in order to catch a benediction as he passed. After making some stop at Treviso, he crossed the Piava over a bridge built on purpose for him, and the Tagliamento, in a boat magnificently ornamented ; and at length arrived at Udina, the last town of that republic, the government of

which affected to prove to him that it was as ready to pay empty homage to the person of the head of the church, as it was backward in shewing marks of deference to his authority.

At length he reached the frontiers of the dominions of a sovereign, far more formidable in his caprices, who was preparing to administer to him the same consolation. On the 14th of March he arrived at Goertz, or Goritz, the first town in Austria. He found there Garampi, the nuncio, count Cobenzel, the emperor's vice-chancellor, a squadron of the life-guards, and several Austrian noblemen. Every thing promised him the most brilliant reception; but his joy was a little disturbed when he learnt that the archbishop of Goertz had just been sent for to Vienna to receive a severe reprimand. He was about to expiate his blind devotion to the Holy See. He had refused to publish the edicts of toleration in his diocese, and had dared to appeal to Rome. Pius VI. pretty well concealed his painful feelings at this first proof of Joseph's inflexibility, and uttered these remarkable words, from which the persons present drew various inferences:—*It is very right; the sovereign's orders should be punctually obeyed.* But those who record the words of great personages should be accompanied by a musician and a painter; one to note down the tone in which they are spoken, the other to pourtray the features of the speaker: we should then know in what way they ought to be interpreted. Upon the arrival of the archbishop of Goertz at Vienna, a very embarrassing alternative was proposed to him. "Sign one of these two writings," said the severe commission before which he was summoned. The one was the resignation of his archbishopric; the other an oath of obedience to the emperor's orders. A day which he asked for consideration not being granted him, he signed the oath, confessed that he grossly disobeyed the emperor's orders, and threw himself upon his clemency. He afterwards received a severe reprimand; was obliged to listen to a long lecture concerning the duty of bishops towards their sovereign; and received orders to repair to his diocese, without so much as seeing Pius VI., who had arrived in the mean time, and to take care that the edicts he had suspended were put in execution. He was besides threatened with a heavy fine if he made the smallest delay, and condemned to pay fifteen hundred florins a year for the support of a pious foun-



foundation. The pope was certainly bound to intercede for him with the emperor; but his entreaties were of no avail. How ill did this augur to the success of his apostolical journey!

But let us continue to follow him upon the road to Vienna. On his arrival at Laybach, in Carniola, he found there the archduchess Mary-Anne, the emperor's eldest sister, whom devotion had brought from her convent of Clagenfurt to the feet of the sovereign pontiff. She was going to prostrate herself before him in reality. The pope hastened to raise her, but could not prevent her from kissing his hand; and much were the pious spectators edified by the humble devotion of the princess, and the modest and kind demeanor of the pontiff. The religious homage of the archduchess was the better received, as the rest of the family had given so much vexation to Pius VI., and held out to him a prospect of more. He intimated his alarms to the illustrious confidant, who repaid his abundant benedictions with the only thing she had at her disposal—fruitless wishes, and vain words of encouragement.

At Laybach, at Marburg, and at Gratz in Stiria, he found himself surrounded by the same concourse of curious people and devotees. In the first of those cities he walked during a whole hour between two thick rows of spectators. At Gratz the public curiosity was still greater; the crowd pressed very close to him; every one wishing to kiss, or at least to touch the sacred vestments of the pontiff. In the midst of all this homage, how was it possible to suppose that he was no more than a man! Accordingly Pius VI. identified himself with him whose vicar he called himself; and seeing that attempts were made to keep off the crowd of the faithful, pronounced with pious pride these words of St. Mark: *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*

Pius VI. was not far from the gates of Vienna, and the tribute of respect was about to become still more striking. Joseph II. could not prevent his malignity from adding to it some sarcasms, both in words and actions. He sent to meet him three nobles of the Hungarian guard, who were to serve him as couriers; and to accustom the pope to his principles of toleration, chose them out of the three religions established in Germany. One was a Catholic, the other a Lutheran, the third a Calvinist. Cardinal Megazzi, archbishop of Vienna, when setting off to meet him, asked the

emperor if the bells of the capital were to be rung at the moment of the pope's making his entry. *A fine question indeed, answered Joseph, are not the bells your artillery?*

The emperor and his brother Maximilian went to meet the pontiff as far as Neunkirchen, a town at a few leagues distance from Vienna. As soon as they perceived his carriage, they alighted; the pope hastened to do the like, and the greetings on both sides were very affectionate. The pope embraced the emperor, and gave him three fraternal kisses. The spectators even thought they observed the tears standing in the eyes of both the eminent personages; one of whom wept easily, and the other when he pleased. The emperor took the pope into his carriage, and seated him on his right hand; and during their entry into Vienna, which was pompous and noisy (it was on the 22d of March 1782), the holy father did not cease to bestow the treasures of his benediction upon an immense crowd of the faithful, intoxicated with joy and devotion.

The pope, enchanted with his reception, was desirous that, even before they arrived at Vienna, his austere, but real friends, Bernis and Azara, should partake of his satisfaction. He sent them word, through the medium of cardinal Pallavicini, that he received upon every occasion the most flattering testimonies of the emperor's affection. Hence, by his account, it was natural to conclude that Joseph was pleased with his journey, and most favourably disposed towards him. These two intelligent ministers would have been diverted by his presumption, if their regard for him had been less sincere.

They heard with pleasure that he had succeeded perfectly well in his *début* at Vienna. His appearance was considered as highly prepossessing; his manners were thought a happy mixture of dignity, affability, and modesty. It was well known, however, that Joseph II., who, in spite of his great qualities, sometimes exhibited a littleness of mind, had taken offence at the acclamations he had met with on his route. It was well known that he was particularly vexed at finding that the pope had taken the liberty of reprimanding the bishops who had published his imperial decrees with affected good-will. He did not even disguise from him his sentiments on that head; but that was a circumstance Pius VI. took great care to conceal. A few days after his arrival at Vienna, he wrote to the cardinal de Bernis, and dwelt much

much upon the entertainments given him by the emperor, and upon the compliments he received from him; but not a word did he say of his negotiation. He enjoined the same silence to all who accompanied him; but the true causes of this reserve were well understood at Rome.

The cardinals were of opinion that he had done a great deal too much for the republic of Venice, of which he had so great reason to complain. They laughed at the importance he attached to popular acclamations, and to those empty homages of *étiquette* which make no alteration in matters of importance. They were afraid that, blinded by his vanity, he would enter into some disgraceful capitulation. "We would much rather," said they, "that he should re- turn without having obtained any thing, than that he should repay the fine words and wheedling of the emperor, by giving up any part whatever of the prerogatives of the Roman church." They had not yet sounded the depth of the abyss that environed the Holy See. The people of Rome were still more stupidly obstinate in their fanaticism. They were heard to say, *St. Peter will not abandon him. If the emperor refuses to comply with the demands of the pope, he will be struck blind.* In reality, Joseph II. had at this time bad eyes; and was eleven days without seeing the pope, or without being able to communicate with him otherwise than by writing. The Romans already began to triumph; but a prudent regimen, and the oculists of Vienna gave the lie to the prophecy.

We refer to the newspapers of the times those who wish to be informed of the minute details of the pope's stay at Vienna, and are desirous of knowing to what religious ceremonies, and to what festivals, the thirty-one days that he passed there were devoted. Suffice it for us to say, that the emperor studiously displayed before the eyes of the pontiff every thing that could give him a high idea of the magnificence of his capital, or tend to excite his admiration of his palaces, his galleries of pictures, his manufactures, and his public establishments; while Pius VI. was in like manner anxious to exhibit all the pompous ceremonies of the Roman religion, in order to dazzle the eyes of the superstitious Austrians with every thing that renders the head of the catholic church awful to the vulgar. He does not appear to have failed in his object. The attention he attracted at Vienna was very great, if we may judge by the report of all

all the eye-witnesses, particularly by what a Lutheran, whose testimony cannot be suspicious, wrote at the time to one of his friends. "The effect of the pope's presence at Vienna," said he, "is wonderful; and I am not astonished at its having formerly produced such strange revolutions. I have seen the pontiff several times at the moment he was giving his benediction to the people of this capital. I am not a catholic, neither am I easily moved; but I do assure you that the sight drew tears from me. You cannot conceive how interesting it is to see more than fifty thousand persons assembled in the same place by the same sentiment, expressing in their looks and gestures the devotion and enthusiasm with which they wait for a benediction that they conceive essential to their prosperity on earth, and to their happiness in another world. Entirely occupied with that idea, they were perfectly insensible to the inconvenience of their situation. Crowded one against another, and scarcely breathing, they saw the head of the catholic church appear in all his pomp; the tiara on his head, dressed in pontifical robes, sacred in their eyes, and magnificent in those of every person, surrounded by all the cardinals who happened to be then at Vienna, and by all the dignified clergy. The pontiff bent down his body towards the earth, raised his arms to heaven in the attitude of a person firmly persuaded that he is conveying thither the vows of a multitude of men, and expressing in his looks his ardent desire that they may be heard. Let any one figure to himself these functions performed by an old man of a majestic person, and of the most noble and pleasing countenance; and let him, if he can, help feeling a strong emotion when he sees this immense crowd fall upon their knees at the moment the benediction is given, and receive it with the same enthusiasm that seems to animate him by whom it is bestowed. For my part, I confess that the impression made upon me by this scene will not be effaced while I live. How strong and deep must it then be in the minds of those who are disposed to let themselves be led away by external acts of devotion!"

The pope happened to be at Vienna during Passion and Easter weeks; the time of all others the most favourable for the display of the ceremonies of the Roman catholic church. Joseph availed himself of the circumstance to destroy the prejudices

prejudices which his philosophy had raised in the minds of the devout, and to prove that it was not incompatible with religion. He piously attended divine worship, which was performed with the greatest imaginable pomp; and allowed the pope to have the honour of taking his place on that day, when, in celebrating the institution of the Lord's Supper, the pride of sovereign grandeur condescends to wash the feet of twelve indigent old men, and to wait upon them at table. Joseph himself selected these representatives of the twelve apostles; one of whom was one hundred and six years of age. In the morning he received the sacrament, as did his brother the archduke, from the hand of the sovereign pontiff. They were afterwards present at the ceremony, but *incognito*. The pope, after blessing the dishes, put them himself upon the table of the guests. He offered one to the emperor, who excused himself by saying that he was there merely as a spectator. Each of the poor men received twenty ducats from his hands, and two medals of gold and silver from those of Pius VI. Easter Sunday was distinguished by a grand ceremony of another kind. The pope celebrated high mass with a degree of solemnity unexampled at Vienna. The two princes of Schwartzenberg and Aversperg washed his hands by turns. After the gospel he delivered a discourse in Latin, and had the double pleasure of displaying his eloquence, and making an impression upon the feelings of his auditors.

Notwithstanding all the precautions of the police to prevent the accidents inevitable in such crowds, the performance of these august ceremonies gave occasion to contusions and broken arms; and more than once the great marketplace was strewed with lost shoes and hats; but every thing was compensated by the happiness of beholding the pontiff, and of receiving his benediction. The eager desire to get a sight of him upon the road bordered upon phrensy. The course of the Danube was often obstructed by the multitude of boats going up and down, full of curious spectators. Crowds of twenty and thirty thousand persons assembled in the streets that lead to the emperor's residence, calling with loud cries for the benediction of the pope. All the avenues to it were blocked up, and more than once a day Pius VI. was obliged to appear in his balcony, and to bestow upon the impatient crowd the cheap favour which they implored with so much ardour. Scarcely were they thus dismissed,  
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when their place was occupied by another multitude ambitious of the same honour. The influx of strangers into Vienna was so prodigious, that apprehensions of a want of provisions were for some time entertained. People crowded from the most remote parts of the hereditary states. The whimsical obstinacy of a peasant was remarked, who was come sixty leagues to see the pope. On his arrival he went and placed himself in one of the halls belonging to the apartment occupied by the pope. "What do you want here?" said one of the guards.—"I wish to see the pope."—"You cannot see him here; begone about your business!"—"No, no! I will wait till he comes, I am in no hurry; go on with what you are about;" and upon this he sat down, and ate his bread very quietly. He had been waiting in this manner for some hours; when the emperor, being informed of his perseverance, himself introduced him to the pope, who received the honest villager very graciously, gave him his hand to kiss, bestowed on him his benediction, and also one of the medals which he had brought with him from Rome. *How cunning the people of Vienna are,* said the peasant, retiring with great satisfaction; *they take good care not to tell me the pope gave money to those who went to see him.*

It was not his person alone that was the object of veneration. No one is ignorant of the sort of worship which the Roman pontiffs suffered to be paid to the most ignoble part of their dress. Pius VI. had foreseen that it would not be refused by the superstitious people of Vienna, and had not forgot his slipper. It was placed upon a cushion in the audience chamber, and was kissed by all the ecclesiastics, who presented themselves in crowds, by many devotees of every class, and even by many persons attracted by curiosity alone, who wished to enjoy the malicious pleasure of playing their part in the most ridiculous scene, perhaps, that superstition ever invented to debase mankind. The holy slipper was even carried about as a relic to several of the most distinguished houses of Vienna; but the greater part of the laity were only permitted to kiss his hand, and the fisherman's ring with which it was adorned.

These enjoyments, however, which so many public and private homages afforded to the vanity of Pius VI., were embittered by several mortifications in more essential matters. Few persons were in the secret of the frequent conferences

ferences which he held with the emperor. It is from the consequences alone, that we know he had little reason to be as well satisfied with them as he affected to say he was after his departure from Vienna. He even experienced, during his stay there, several disappointments which belied his assertions. It was discovered that, in his conversations with the emperor, the great questions which had given occasion to his journey were never thoroughly discussed. In the emperor's closet only one single political conference took place, at which were present prince Kaunitz, cardinal Migazzi, archbishop of Vienna, and cardinal Herzan, the emperor's minister at Rome. The pope endeavoured to move Joseph II. by a pathetic speech, which he interspersed with arguments drawn from the canon law. He had no reason to congratulate himself on the success of his harangue. The emperor evaded all discussion. "I am no theologian," answered he; "I am too little acquainted with the canon law to enter into a verbal argument. Your holiness will have the goodness to commit to paper the representations you may think proper to address to me, in order that I may submit them to the examination of my theologians. Cardinal Herzan has already informed you of the resolutions I have taken relative to the churches and convents in my dominions. My only object in every thing that has been done, or that yet remains to be done, is the good of my subjects. The new arrangements that I have determined upon were indispensably necessary; and I will maintain them with the greater firmness, as not one of them affects, in the slightest degree, the doctrine of the church. If your holiness wishes for a more ample explanation, you may deliver your objections in writing; my chancellor will answer them officially, and in the fullest manner, and I will even have them printed for the information of my subjects." This was giving him sufficiently to understand what he had to expect. The formidable chancellor in question was the prince de Kaunitz [no less a philosopher, and, perhaps, still more inflexible, than the emperor himself], whose frigid demeanor and silence it was not easy for Pius VI. to misconstrue. He endeavoured, by fawning and flattery, to smooth the rugged brow of the prime minister, and received in return nothing but cold politeness and unmeaning answers.

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He expected at least to receive the first visit from him. The minister of the emperor could never entertain the presumptuous idea of its being paid him by the sovereign pontiff of the universal church. Thus reasoned Pius VI. Pius VI. reasoned ill. The pride of prince Kaunitz could not even stoop before the Holy See. Pius VI., who was desirous of viewing his magnificent apartments, particularly his gallery of pictures, was at length forced to make advances highly repugnant to his dignity. He sent to inquire when he could have an opportunity of seeing him, and of admiring the curiosities his palace contained. Kaunitz fixed a day and an hour, and the pope was punctual to the appointment. On reaching the chancellor's house, he found his family dressed in superb gala suits, and his servants clad in their richest liveries. The gate-way, the stair-case, and the vestibule were full of men who came out to meet him, and were eager to pay him the honours due to his supreme rank. He prepared himself for the most distinguished reception on the part of the master of the house. He was already in his apartments, when the prince de Kaunitz at length made his appearance, but in a morning dress, and with an air rather familiar than respectful. Pius VI. held out his hand to him. Instead of kissing it, as the pope naturally expected, in conformity with a custom from which nobody had ever derogated, Kaunitz laid hold of it, shook it, and squeezed it in a very affectionate manner, which much astonished the pontiff, and greatly scandalised every body present. With affected politeness, he afterwards insisted upon being his *Cicerone*. He pointed out to him the beauties of his pictures. He made him walk forwards, step back, turn to the right, and to the left, in order that he might see each of them in its proper light. This was the first time that Pius VI. ever felt himself pulled and pushed about in every direction by a profane hand; he who was never approached but with an air of the most respectful awe, nor ever touched unless to receive homage. It was not without difficulty that he preserved his composure during the whole of this scene, which appeared strange to every body, except to the principal actor; and, that he might not increase the mortification that he was made to undergo, by appearing to be sensible of it, he was obliged to testify his acknowledgments to prince de Kaunitz for this extreme complaisance, of which he, indeed, received no other proof. The fine arts were the only subject on which



which the grave and austere chancellor could talk with the sovereign pontiff. He evaded all conversation upon other topics; and if a judgment could be formed of the sovereign by his minister, Pius VI. had no reason to hope that he should derive any benefit from his journey. In fact he found Joseph II. much more open and kind than the prince de Kaunitz; but fully as inflexible. He soon had an opportunity of judging of the degree to which the emperor was tenacious of his political maxims, even in the most minute circumstances.

The Barnabites had just erected in their church a marble altar, which cardinal Migazzi consecrated. The monks solicited of the pope a plenary indulgence for this altar. The favour, which was very insignificant, and little interesting to the emperor, was readily granted by the pope, by a brief which he wrote with his own hand. But the provincial of the Barnabites being desirous of having the brief printed, could not obtain permission to have it done till after it had undergone the formalities required by the new ordinances; that is, till after it had been signed by the emperor, like any other brief that might have been made out at Rome.

Notwithstanding these unpleasant appearances, Pius VI. was, or at least pretended to be, satisfied with the emperor. It is true that, in other respects, he obtained from Joseph every thing that was calculated to flatter his vanity. Their conferences were of the most friendly kind. The emperor spoke to him confidentially concerning the principal personages in Europe, and the interest of the other courts; and even made discoveries to him which might have appeared indiscreet. At no one time did he shew the smallest symptom of ill humour; which was most assuredly, on the part of Joseph, a strong proof of the desire he felt to please the pontiff.

The pope, on his side, neglected nothing to render himself agreeable to the emperor. He took every opportunity of praising his affability, his information, his strong and cultivated mind, and even his devotion. In this latter particular he was even guilty of an imprudence, the intention of which might be good, but which was censured at Rome with great severity. There were then at Vienna four cardinals; Migazzi, Herzan, Firmian, bishop of Passau, and Batthyani, an Hungarian nobleman. This was one more  
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than, strictly speaking, was absolutely necessary to a consistory. Pius VI. had sufficiently shewn his fondness for parade. He afforded a fresh proof of it by holding a consistory at Vienna, under the pretence of giving the hat to Firmian and Batthyani, the two cardinals. In this assembly, at which Joseph II. and his brother Maximilian were present, he delivered a Latin discourse, which he concluded with a pompous panegyric on the emperor: "We have had," cried he with enthusiasm, "frequent opportunities of seeing him; and we cannot help admiring, not only the unlimited kindness with which he welcomed us to his imperial residence, and the magnificent manner in which he there daily receives us, but also his *uncommon* devotion, his extraordinary talents, and his incredible application to business. What a consolation for our paternal heart, to find that piety and religion reign, without having received the slightest injury, not only in this splendid capital, but also among all the inhabitants of the imperial states through which we passed. We shall never cease then to celebrate his virtues, and to support them with our fervent prayers. We implore Almighty God, who never abandons those who seek him, to strengthen his imperial majesty in his holy resolutions, and to shower down upon him his celestial grace."

The people of Vienna, to whom the court took care to make known this passage of the speech, through the medium of the press, were much edified by the affecting effusion of the sovereign pontiff. But must not the emperor have laughed within himself at praises so unexpected, and so little deserved? Pius VI., in the simplicity of his heart, justified them in his own eyes, by recalling to mind a conversation he had had with him a few days before. Joseph had asked him, whether, in any one of his new ordinances, there was a single article which affected the Christian doctrine; and whether his holiness must not confess that they related solely to the discipline of the church? Pius VI. had admitted it; upon which the emperor had replied, *I am not then a heretic, as is supposed at Rome.* The pope concluded from this, that the emperor had thought he perceived some charges of heresy in his correspondence with Garampi, his nuncio; and he took, or rather created, an opportunity of making amends for the wrong he had done the illustrious host, by whom he was so well entertained. But the Roman

man cardinals, who had no apology to make, and who were sensible that the Imperial ordinances attacked ecclesiastical prerogatives much more interesting to them than the doctrine of the church, did not admit the validity of the pope's justification, but asserted, that his pompous harangue, the offspring of his vanity, was a tacit approbation of the emperor's disastrous measures.

While he was boasting of the ascendancy he had gained over him; and while cardinal Herzan was informing his friends at Rome, that the pope never spoke of the emperor but in terms of *admiration and gratitude*, what was the conduct of that prince? He did not even wait for the pontiff's departure to proceed with his reforms; but continued, without the consent of the Holy See, to suppress the monastic orders in the Milanese, and the state of Mantua. Could Pius VI. sincerely believe in Joseph's devotion, which, in his eyes, must have consisted chiefly in shewing a respectful deference to the pontifical authority?

But an explanation of these contradictions is to be found in the inconsistency of his character, and in the facility with which he suffered himself to be dazzled by external homage paid to his person. Joseph, who soon divined his disposition, was not sparing of those means of seduction. In the course of the month of April, the pope was informed by a courier, that unforeseen and important affairs required his speedy return. He immediately began to make preparations for his departure; but it was easily seen that they were not unattended with regret; for he was well aware that his journey had as yet been productive of no real advantage. Accordingly, when a foreign minister was indiscreet enough to ask him on what day he intended to set off, Pius VI. made answer: *I am pope, it is true, but not prophet; my departure depends upon the issue of my negotiation.* It was, however, foreseen, that it would not be deferred. The emperor ordered an elegant travelling carriage to be prepared for him: the period was now arrived in which he was about to display his magnificence. He made him a present of a *pectoral* †, enriched with diamonds, valued at two hundred thousand florins. Pius VI. said, on accepting it: "I shall not consider this present as my personal property, but as an appendage of the Holy See, for my successors

† The cross worn upon the breast by the dignified clergy of the Roman catholic church. T.

“ successors to wear on days of great solemnity, as a mark of Imperial benevolence.” Joseph went still farther. He delivered to the pope, by the hands of the vice-chancellor of the empire, a diploma, conferring on his nephew, Lewis Braschi Onesti, the dignity of prince of the holy Roman empire, exempting him at the same time from the fees paid in like cases, which are estimated at ninety thousand florins. Pius VI. exhibited on this occasion, a very unexpected proof of wisdom, which would have been quite complete, had it not been extolled by himself. But modesty was not his favourite virtue. He at first accepted the diploma, but afterwards returned it to the emperor, begging him to reserve that favour for a more suitable time. *I should be sorry, added he, to have it said, that I have been more attentive to the aggrandisement of my family than to the interest of the church.* The emperor approved this instance of self-denial, and the diploma remained, till further orders, in the hands of prince Colloredo. Magnificent presents were made to the persons who attended the pope. Pius VI., in his turn, could not avoid giving proofs of his liberality to those who had been appointed by the emperor to attend him. This did not fail to increase the cost of a journey already so expensive. It was calculated that this useless whim added a million of Roman crowns to the debts of the Apostolical Chamber. The disbursement of such a sum, especially at a time when the bad administration of public affairs began to excite alarming murmurs, would scarcely have been justified by the most complete success. We shall soon see whether that was the case.

Every circumstance that attended upon the separation of Pius VI., and of the emperor, was calculated to add to the gratitude of the pontiff. Joseph endeavoured to keep up his delusion to the very moment of his departure, and even beyond that period. Every thing that was most striking and sumptuous in the *étiquette* of his court was lavishly displayed while he was paying the last honours to his guest, who was become his friend, or who at least indulged that idea. He promised him repeatedly to repay his visit. He was determined to make a proper return. The cases, however, were by no means parallel. The taste of Joseph for travelling was well known; and that taste was neither suitable to the usual age, nor to the situation of the Roman pontiff. But Pius VI., who was always ready to view every thing in the light

light most gratifying to his vanity, set off most highly satisfied with this promise; Joseph and his brother accompanying him to the distance of a league from Vienna. They all three alighted at the church of Mariabrunn; entered it, and after having offered up their prayers with equal fervour, Joseph and the archduke received the embrace and benediction of the holy father, and left him with an appearance of the most lively emotion. The crowd that surrounded them was affected; tears were mingled with acclamations; and the pope took the road that led to the convent of Mœlk, where he was to pass the night.

The monks of Mariabrunn, at the particular request of the pope and the emperor, immortalised the time and place of this affecting separation. Some months after, the following inscription, in Latin and German, was engraved upon marble, and placed at the entrance of the church:

“ Pius VI., sovereign pontiff, and Joseph II., emperor of the Romans, with the archduke Maximilian, after having offered up their prayers in this church, parted in the midst of the most tender embraces, and of the tears of all the spectators.”

But what is still more singular than this monument, is that the very day on which this *affecting* separation took place, the emperor's commissaries came and declared to the monks, that henceforward his Imperial majesty would save them the trouble of receiving their income, and that their convent was put in sequestration. Upon the communication of this intelligence, they became a little less sensible of the honour they had just received; and began to suspect that the sovereign pontiff might possibly have made an ineffectual journey.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*The Pope's Return to Rome.*

PIUS VI. did not, or at least pretended not, to participate in the uneasiness which began to be conceived even in Austria, as to the result of his journey. In letters written from Vienna, a few days before his departure, and from several places on the road, he said, indeed, that, though perfectly well satisfied with the reception given him by the emperor, *he had not been able to gain any essential point*; because he, as the head of the church, had not chosen to make concessions repugnant to his feelings. In proportion, however, as he approached his residence, he felt that, to procure a good reception, it was necessary to prepare men's minds by holding a different kind of language. Besides, he had received, while on the road, three letters from the emperor, which, doubtless, inspired him with some vague hopes. He accordingly wrote to his nephew, from Bologna, to the following effect: "I have obtained from the emperor every thing that I desired. He has suppressed the new oath which he had required from the bishops in his dominions; and, on my part, I have given them the power of granting dispensations for marriages as far as the third and fourth degree of consanguinity, and even for nearer degrees, only binding them to ask my permission in certain cases.—I have also obtained several modifications in regard to the monasteries of both sexes, and to religious toleration.—*Upon the whole,*" added he, "*my presence has been highly advantageous to religion; and I cannot help congratulating myself upon my journey.*"

It is probable that he might be really sincere in thus magnifying himself the very slight advantages that he had gained. His vanity had been completely gratified; and that was a great reason for his *congratulating himself upon his journey*. The truth was, that he had submitted, without difficulty, to the suppression of useless convents; because at the bottom of his heart he was no friend to the monks, and that he had acquiesced in the emperor's maxims of toleration, because he was not himself inclined to persecution. But he

he returned deeply afflicted by the annihilation of certain bulls; monuments most dear to him, as the authority of the Holy See. He was grieved at the re-establishment of the bishops in their primitive rights, at the measure which subjected the monks of their diocese to their authority, and which rendered the latter independent of their generals resident at Rome. Upon all these points he had in vain endeavoured to convert Joseph and his ministers. He had obtained some promises, which kept alive his delusion. The emperor agreed with him that the superfluous monasteries should be shut up; but that he would not totally suppress any monastic order; and that an *imprimatur* should not be granted for any pamphlet written against the legitimate exercise of the papal authority. For Messrs. Eybel and Sonnenfels, two Austrian writers, examined with great severity the pretensions of the court of Rome; the former in a work entitled, *What is the pope?* the latter in a publication relative to the journey of Pius VI. Joseph II. permitted him also to hope that, during his pontificate, things should remain upon the old footing as to the bishoprics and benefices of Lombardy. Pius VI., on his departure, had therefore some reason to believe that his apostolical journey had not been altogether ineffectual. But of these two negotiators, each of whom flattered himself, perhaps, that he had overreached the other, one thought that he has as yet only tasted the first-fruits of his success, the other that he had as yet only put the first hand to his reforms. Soon after one of them discovered that he had been deceived, or at least that he had deceived himself; and the other, that he had remained unshaken in his resolutions. But let us follow Pius VI. on his return to Rome.

The day of his departure he slept at Mœlk, in the same convent which, sixteen years afterwards, was intended for his asylum, when, in the first moments of the revolution at Rome, the emperor, the nephew of him who had entertained him in more prosperous times, agreed with the French government to receive him in his dominions. The count de Cobenzel accompanied him as far as Braunau, the first town of Bavaria, on the road from Austria to Rome. The elector was determined that the pope should not perceive that he was travelling in the territory of a different prince. He displayed all the pomp of his army, of his guards, and in short all the magnificence of his court. He went to meet

him, seated him in a superb carriage which he took with him on purpose, and conducted him to his capital in the midst of the pious acclamations of a nation which vies in devotion, even with the people of Vienna. He passed six days in the city of Munich, which is called the *Rome of Germany*; and could easily perceive that the title was not ill bestowed. The Bavarian government was far from possessing that philosophical courage which rendered the court of Vienna so formidable to the Holy See. Pius VI. received from it nothing but homages; the enjoyment of which was disturbed by no unpleasant circumstance. The court of Munich had even carried its attentions so far, as to redouble its orthodoxical severity, in order to prevent the occurrence of any thing which might give the pontiff the smallest alarm. Two days before his arrival, all the booksellers and printers received orders not to sell or publish any work which had not passed through the hands of the electoral censors. His piety and vanity were equally gratified during his stay in Bavaria. It was the only country in Europe where the authority of the Holy See had remained unimpaired. The court, although renowned for gallantry, had preserved a great attachment for every thing that constitutes the external part of religion. The nation was one of the most ignorant, and consequently one of the most superstitious, of the catholic world. Whole legions of fanatical monks formed one of the most valuable divisions of the papal troops. No spark of philosophy had diminished either their pious belief or their blind subordination. The Holy See reckoned in Bavaria alone more than five thousand trusty satellites. The pope was more revered there than in Rome itself, and the homages which he received were equally unanimous and profound. Accordingly when he approached Augsbourg, and was about to pass the western limits of Bavaria, he turned round with emotion towards that country so favoured by heaven, and lavished upon it his benedictions and his good wishes, of which it had shewn itself so deserving.

The elector of Treves, who had waited upon him at Munich, attended him as far as Augsbourg, of which he was bishop, and where he had a palace. On entering the territory of that Imperial city, where the sectarists of both religions, the catholic and protestant, are equally tolerated, and have each a share in the government, Pius VI. was, for the



the first time, in a land infected with heresy ; a circumstance which measures had been taken to prevent his perceiving. The catholic magistrates asked their protestant colleagues how they proposed to receive the pope. They answered, that it was contrary to their religious principles to receive him in that quality ; but that they respected him as a crowned head, and would readily concur in any homage which might be paid him upon that ground. They kept their word. Pius VI. was complimented by a deputation of the senate, consisting of two catholics and two protestants, and received the presents which the Imperial cities are accustomed to make to distinguished personages. Every thing that was interesting in Augsbourg was shewn to him, particularly all that appertained to the arts and sciences.

Pius VI. was possessed of erudition, at least in what related to theological affairs. He displayed it with affectation, and it was celebrated, as it generally happens in similar cases, by the most exaggerated flattery. At the library of the city, where his literary knowledge was most conspicuously displayed, an incident occurred, trifling enough in itself, but which produced a great effect upon the public mind in Germany. The librarian, M. Mertens, who was a protestant, was commissioned to make a speech to him ; but considering himself as the organ of the whole city, in which the catholic religion was co-equal with his own, he hazarded expressions so respectful, and so little conformable to the language of a heretic, that all those of his sect took great offence ; and the pontiff himself appeared almost as much embarrassed as flattered. It was still worse when the learned protestant was seen to bend his knee before the head of the catholic church ; all the fanatics, for there are also fanatics among the Lutherans, set up an outcry against such idolatry. In vain did Mertens endeavour to excuse himself, by saying that genuflexion was one of the ceremonies of the Spanish court. He was not forgiven for affording the papists so signal a triumph.

Pius VI. passed three days at Augsbourg, in the midst of ceremonies, religious and profane ; and no where did he leave behind him a more favourable idea of his eloquence, affability, and knowledge. The journals of the day speak of them in terms of enthusiasm.

Augsbourg was interesting to him in more than one point of view. It was there that he received, for the first time,

the homage of those refractory children, whom he had been accustomed to hold in horror and detestation; it was at Augsbourg that the Roman church had received that painful wound which is still bleeding; and it was there, in short, that he found himself in the presence of that elector of Treves, to whom he was indebted for one of the greatest consolations that Rome, afflicted by so many misfortunes, had for a long time received. For it was to the sollicitation of this devout prince, that M. Hontheim, his suffragan, had yielded, when he recanted, as we have before observed, his work published under the name of Febronius, and which was so formidable to the court of Rome. He accordingly took great pleasure in the society of a client, whose zeal did not appear to him less edifying than his birth was illustrious. He was not, like Joseph II., one of those children disobedient to his paternal exhortations; nor was the tribute of respect that he received from him mere show and grimace. Notwithstanding his apparent serenity, he stood in need of consolation; and found it in the effusions of the pious elector.

The secret chagrin and disquietude which accompanied him from Vienna, manifested themselves at Augsbourg upon a remarkable occasion. Among the personages, more or less distinguished by their rank, who crowded round him, were four prelates of the empire, imperceptible sovereigns, whose territory is scarcely visible upon the map. One of them, bishop of Ochsenhausen, in Swabia, conversing with him in Latin, the pope asked him how many convents he had belonging to his see. *I have eleven under me*, answered the prelate, *with a sorrowful air; but six of them are situated in the Austrian dominions.* This was recalling painful ideas to the mind of Pius VI.; for, among other measures that the emperor had taken, he had decreed that no priest in the Austrian states should in future acknowledge a foreign sovereignty. Here Pius VI., lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, suffered his painful secret to escape him. *Oh! my dear children, I have left nothing unattempted to keep things as they formerly were, or to restore them to their pristine state; BUT — the business, however, is not finally settled: let us pray and hope.* He did not express himself in this manner in the letters which he wrote to Rome.

Three days after, he set off for the Tyrol, the elector accompanying him as far as the frontiers of his little state. There

There a separation took place still more affecting than the preceding ones. On the 7th of May he arrived at Inspruck, where he was received by the archduchess Elisabeth, the emperor's third sister. She was abbess in that town which was the capital of the Tyrol. Her brother had recommended her to receive the sovereign pontiff with all the solemnity compatible with her situation; but the archduchess was led by her pious sentiments to improve upon the emperor's instructions. He was received at Brixen by the bishop, who endeavoured, by every mark of respect, to make the holy father forget the chagrin he had given him the preceding year, by strictly forbidding the clergy of his diocese the use of the bull *Unigenitus*. He arrived at Trent on the 10th of May, and was received there by the bishop of that city, so famous in the annals of the Roman church; but he made no stay. After having passed through Roveredo, he a second time entered the Venetian territories. Verona received him with a display of all the magnificence of which its situation admits. The wide bed of the Adige, which washes the walls of that city, reflected the splendor of a superb illumination. Conducted in pomp to the amphitheatre of Verona, and looking down from the top of that noble monument of the ancient Romans upon the vast enclosure which formerly was devoted to their pleasures, the sovereign, the great pontiff of modern Rome, lavished his benedictions upon sixty thousand of the faithful prostrate at his feet. The bishop of Verona was treated by the holy father less affectionately than his flock. He had recently addressed a pastoral letter to his diocesans in the Tyrol, which was too consonant with the principles of the cabinet of Vienna not to give great displeasure to the bishop of Rome. He had dared to suppress the confraternities of the Heart of Jesus, and of the Lord of St. Francis. He had dared to forbid the admission of the pope's indulgences till they had been examined by himself, and had obtained the approbation of the emperor. It would have required a great effort of Christian charity in Pius VI. to forgive such serious injuries.

No similar circumstance embittered the pleasure he derived from the brilliant reception that awaited him at Vicenza and Padua. He was approaching the capital of that republic against which he had more than one cause of complaint; and, notwithstanding the repugnance of the Sacred College, could not resist the temptation of seeing Venice. The senate,

nate, which was acquainted with his intention, sent Manin and Contarini, two procurators of St. Mark, to meet him as far as the frontiers of the Tyrol, and to preside over the entertainments that were prepared for him all along the road. His entry into Venice afforded a spectacle, the only one of its kind, perhaps, in the world, and such as the Venetians themselves had never seen. The patriarch, and eighteen bishops of the Venetian state, had gone as far as Fusina to receive him, each in his own gondola, and each surrounded by the dignitaries of his diocese. Upon the banks of the Brenta, he found a galley magnificently adorned, which the doge and the *signoria* had sent him. He was thus conducted, surrounded with a crowd of boats and gondolas, as far as the island of San Georgio-in-Alga, situated at the distance of half a league from the city. There the doge, the senate, and the principal magistrates of the republic, were waiting for him in their magnificent gala dresses. Upon perceiving them, the pope landed from his galley; and the doge received him in his arms, and was about to fall at his feet. Pius VI. graciously prevented him; and from that moment the most friendly intimacy took place between them, and began to awaken the suspicions of the jealous senators appointed to watch over the conduct of the doge. They embarked in the same gondola with the patriarch, and two nuncios; Garampi of Vienna, who had accompanied his holiness ever since his departure, and Ranucci of Venice. Their retinue seated themselves in the two other two gondolas belonging to the doge. They rowed along, attended by five or six thousand boats and other vessels, variously ornamented. Upon approaching the great canal of the mint, which is the true entrance of Venice, the pope was saluted with two hundred guns, from seven gallees stationed in that port. For several hours all the bells in the city announced his arrival. The banks of the canals, all the windows, and all the roofs of the houses were crowded with spectators. Never had such universal enthusiasm, nor such a concourse of people, been seen at Venice; nor could any city in Europe exhibit a multitude of spectators consisting of such motley groups. After empty, but brilliant ceremonies, the pope was taken to see every thing remarkable that Venice contained. The Venetians had reserved for him the spectacle most likely to gratify his curiosity; the ceremony of the marriage of the doge to the Adriatic sea. It was regularly celebrated

celebrated on the Ascension-day ; but this year it was deferred till Whit-monday, on account of the pope. Every thing was prepared to make the sight as pleasing to him as possible. The preceding evening he had officiated with great pomp in one of the principal churches of the city. The day of his departure was drawing near. Entreaties were vain ; his resolution was not to be shaken. What could be his motive ? On this it is not easy to form any conjecture ; for Pius VI. could sometimes be secret and reserved. It had, however, been remarked, that the doge had been extremely prodigal of his attentions to the pope ; that he had had several conferences with him, which were thought too familiar ; and that sometimes, even in public, he had affected to speak to him in a whisper. What secrets could he have to communicate ? Could the nominal head of the republic, who is subject to more rigorous laws than the meanest citizen, have any thing to conceal from the knowledge of the senate ? The republic had firmly resisted the usurped authority of the Holy See. By vindicating its unalienable rights, it had afflicted the sovereign pontiff. Did the doge wish to soothe the pope's resentment of this severe conduct ; to give him consolation, or even hopes ? Did he wish to make his peace at the expense of his sovereign ? The gloomy state-inquisitors doubtless conceived suspicions, and did not hide them from the doge. They reminded him, in harsh terms, of his dependence, his duty, and his danger. The pope perceived it, and repented having done the jealous senate an honour of which the Sacred College thought it unworthy. He was afraid of being a source of trouble to his affectionate host, whose affability might be construed into a crime against the state ; and set off from Venice on Whit-sunday, without waiting for the ceremony, still more absurd than pompous, which was to be celebrated on the following day.

He passed a second time through Padua, where new honours awaited him. On his arrival at Canaro, which was the boundary between the Venetian and the ecclesiastical states, he took leave of the two procurators of St. Mark, who had accompanied him thus far. He was received upon the banks of the Po by cardinals Des Lances and Caraffa, who were come to congratulate him on his return to Italy. After having passed over the bridge recently built across the Po, he made his solemn entry into Ferrara, the first city of his

his dominions, and immediately resumed the exercise of his sovereignty. On the very day after his arrival he held a consistory, in which he proclaimed the dignity conferred on cardinal Herzan, whose nomination he had, according to a whimsical custom, reserved *in petto* for three years. He raised to the same dignity the archbishop of Ferrara and the good cardinal Mattei, who will again be brought forward when we have occasion to speak of the Roman revolution. This prelate joined to the piety of his profession a peaceable disposition; but his mind was inclined to superstition, and a blind devotion to the maxims of the Holy See. His exaltation astonished a part of the inhabitants of Rome, and was a triumph for the Jesuitical party, who thence concluded that Pius VI. had not been perverted by his travels.

At Bologna, he received an affectionate visit from one of his most faithful and most illustrious children, the duke of Parma, who had inherited none of the philosophical boldness with which his father had dared to resist the pretensions of the court of Rome. At Imola, he was received by his uncle, cardinal Bandi; on the gate of Faenza he found flattering inscriptions, by which his vanity was much gratified. At Cesena, he had an enjoyment of another kind. He there found his family assembled, happy to see and to welcome him again to his native place. Continuing his route afterwards through Pefaro, Faano, and Sinigaglia, he arrived at Ancona, where he was received with great parade. A statue had been erected in that city, representing him giving his benediction to the people; but it was something else that the inhabitants of Ancona expected from his magnificence. He paid a visit to their port, where he was received with a salute of artillery and martial music; went on board a ship which had been prepared for him, and for a moment fancied that he was possessed of a navy. He made a very short stay at our Lady of Loretto, Recanati, and Macerata; performing, however, divine worship, and distributing benedictions wherever he stopped.

As he approached Rome, his route was marked by accumulated homages of respect and stupid admiration. In several places he passed under triumphal arches; in others he found pompous inscriptions. At Foligno, some nuns of a poor convent solicited relief: *It would be of no use to you,* answered the pope, *your convent will be immediately suppressed.* It was so, in reality, a short time after; but the suppression of

of monasteries, from whatever quarter it came, was fore to be a source of chagrin to the holy father. The expulsion of these poor nuns from their convent occasioned an insurrection among the people ; and to suppress it, the two authorities were obliged to concert measures. The magistrate came to the assistance of the bishop, and ordered the rioters to be apprehended. There are times and places in which inclination alone is insufficient to operate the most useful and even the most trifling reforms.

From Foligno, Pius VI. proceeded through Spoleto and Narni to Otricoli. In the latter place he had an opportunity of making a parade of his taste for the arts and sciences, which the many curiosities of every kind that he had seen, during the last two months, had only served to revive. Carara, the secretary of the congregation of the council, who in a profession, in general devoted to inutility, had cultivated the fine arts with success, was waiting for him at Otricoli. It was he who was charged to continue in the environs of that place the excavations which had already furnished the *Museum Pio Clementinum* with the most exquisite monuments of art, antique statues, busts, columns, tripods, and mosaics. Pius VI. applauded these discoveries as his own work, and, after having given orders to proceed with the excavations, took the road to Civita Castellana ; the last place at which he slept before his arrival at Rome. He there found two persons whom he had made happy during his journey, monsignor Campanelli, recently elevated to the office of pope's auditor, and monsignore Erskine, whom he had appointed promoter of the faith. These premature favours had satisfied none but those who had received them. Campanelli and Erskine were two upstarts, who had as yet deserved but little of the Holy See. The favour they enjoyed was an additional grievance, with which the pope's impolicy furnished the malcontents of Rome, whom he should rather have thought of appeasing. But for some time past he seemed condemned to act unseasonably upon every occasion.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The Pope's Arrival and Reception at Rome.*

UPON approaching his capital, Pius VI. received testimonies so expressive of the satisfaction felt at his return, that a man more modest than himself might have believed them sincere. Whether, however, he was tired of homages, or conscious that he did not deserve those that were reserved for him, he requested and obtained that a part of them should be suppressed. It was intended to erect a triumphal arch upon the *Piazza del popolo*, which he was to cross, to illuminate all the quarters of the town through which he was to pass, and to celebrate his entry by fireworks, concerts, a great entertainment, and even a ball. It was also the intention of the Sacred College to go and meet him at the *Porta del popolo*. Pius VI. declined all these honours: he only permitted Albani, the dean of the cardinals, cardinal Antonelli, his favourite, and his beloved nephew, the duke de Nemi, to come and receive him at Ponto Molle. He could not, however, escape from all those noisy testimonies of public joy, which are rather matters of form than of real respect; from salutes of artillery, the ringing of the numerous bells of Rome, and the illumination of the principal hotels. But those effusions of the heart, those spontaneous acclamations which a contented people pour forth, but which cannot be extorted from them, all those testimonies of affection and gratitude which a sovereign must and ought to feel, were not very prodigally bestowed; and this he must have perceived. It was not that the Roman people doubted of his success with the emperor; and even if they had, Pius VI. having other claims upon their affection, would have been pitied, and have been only the more beloved; but matters which more nearly concerned them were the measure of their sentiments in regard to the pontiff. The whole ecclesiastical state, particularly the capital, complained aloud of the high price of provisions; and it was not by their silence only that his subjects had expressed their discontent,



content. All along the road from Bologna he had heard the most bitter complaints; received the most energetic petitions; and the momentary enthusiasm, occasioned by his return, did not efface the unpleasant impressions they had made. While he was passing in state through the streets of his capital, some of those expressions were heard which courtiers call *seditions*. The cardinals and the prelates who were about him concealed, or disguised the truth. Cardinal Pallavicini, his secretary of state, an honest, though a weak man, felt much concern, but said nothing. The cardinal de Bernis himself, perhaps the most sincere of his friends, did not dare to break a silence, so scrupulously observed by those about the pope's person; but from that time he was accustomed to say, *I see plainly that the reign of Pius VI. will in the end cost him many a tear.* The common people, who had less discretion, revealed to him what was so carefully kept secret. A few days after his return he was hissed in the streets of Rome; and dared no longer to go out on foot. But at that time one thing only occupied his mind. He was persuaded that he had immortalised himself by his apostolical journey; and, by way of obtaining credit for his success, was loud in his praise of Joseph II. In his first interview with his most intimate friends, he ingenuously said: "The emperor has a great deal of religion. He assured me, and proved, that he was the best catholic upon the face of the earth. It was by his counsellors that he was led astray, after the death of his respectable mother." The wise, but severe minister of Spain, agreed that his journey did him honour; but I doubt," added he, "whether it will be useful to religion and the Holy See."—"Give me time," replied the holy father, "and you shall see that I will obtain more from the emperor than you may perhaps imagine."

The truth, and it was soon evident, even to the most undiscerning, was, that he had suffered himself to be imposed upon by the wheedling manners of Joseph II., and to be deceived by his vague and unmeaning promises. Joseph, when he chose to take the trouble, was sure to please; and he neglected nothing to make himself agreeable to the pope. Penetrating and artful, he was soon acquainted with his adversary, who was a perfect stranger to the language of courts, and had neither desire nor power to dissemble. He easily divined his inclinations, and took care to flatter the propen-

fit

city which he discovered for the defunct society of Jesus. This, indeed, was one of the great means employed to gain his point. Accordingly Pius VI., on his return, proud of the emperor's concurrence in his sentiments, was less careful to conceal that affection, which the courts of Versailles and Madrid had long suspected, in spite of his protestations to the contrary. He took a pleasure in repeating to the ministers of those courts, that the emperor had said to him : " If the suppression of the Jesuits had depended upon me, it should not have taken place. Charles III. was in the wrong to insist upon it with so much warmth; but the empress of Russia is fully resolved to *preserve at least the seed.*"—Pius VI., by these communications, prepared himself an excuse for the condescension which he did not delay shewing, upon this occasion, to the formidable Catherine. But he betrayed his own secret; and the ministers of France and Spain expressed to him their uneasiness. No matter, said they, if the empress of Russia keep the Jesuits in her empire, provided you do not acknowledge them as such. Upon which the pope hastened to justify the suspicion, and again protested that he would fulfil the promise he had made.

The question, however, was to give a formal account of this journey, which had made so much noise, and been so very expensive, to dazzle at least the credulous, and to obtain the applause that had been so sparingly dealt out to him on his arrival. He had taken time to prepare a pompous narrative, which was not ready till three months after his return. Notwithstanding the high opinion he entertained of his own eloquence, and the small share of confidence he reposed in cardinal Pallavicini, he chose to submit this narrative to his judgment. The cardinal found it prolix and minute, and took the liberty of making a great many erasements, which did not make it appear less tedious and unseasonable. The pope delivered it with great emphasis, in a solemn consistory held on the 23d of September. After a multiplicity of particulars, which served only to prove his puerile vanity, he thus concluded : " The *great genius* of the emperor Joseph, " his very particular affection, of which we have received " so many proofs, his affability, his philanthropy, had appeared to us a favourable augury; and we must confess, " added he, *that our confidence has not been deceived.* Indeed " we have already obtained from his equity some important " concessions,

"concessions, and he likewise gives us hopes of obtaining several others.

The Sacred College did not expect to hear from the mouth of the pope only a long account of compliments and ceremonies. What had the catholic church, meaning themselves, benefited by this journey, the object of which was to convert the emperor? This was a subject in regard to which the pontiff left them in total ignorance. It is true that he promised, by a brief, to make the whole catholic world acquainted with the advantages he had gained. But this promise would have been difficult to fulfil. The events which took place shortly after his return to Rome would but too fully have contradicted the assertions that he might, perhaps, have ventured to insert in his brief.

His journey, which had met with so little approbation, even at Rome, before it was begun, became, when it was finished, a subject of bitter reproaches, and even of invective. A short time after holding his consistory, the expectation of which had, perhaps, suspended the resentment of the discontented, he found upon his praying-desk a virulent writing, which, among other abuse, contained the following phrase: *What Gregory VII., the greatest of priests, had established, Pius VI., the lowest of priests, has destroyed.* In the mouth of a philosopher this would have been an eulogium. It was a calumny in the mouth of a fanatic. The pope was very much affected at this injustice. He submitted to it with a resignation that does him honour. He wrote with his pencil the following answer at the bottom of the abusive paper: *The kingdom of Christ is not of this world: he who distributes heavenly crowns, taketh not away perishable crowns. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.* Pius VI. would have saved himself a great deal of vexation, had he regulated his conduct by these maxims; but even to profess them was much for a pope. This answer, indeed, displayed as much dejection as it did moderation. It sufficiently indicated that Pius VI. was beginning to open his eyes. From that period every thing concurred to involve him in affliction. The formidable claims of Joseph II., the opinions of the enlightened men at that time in Europe, found partisans even at Rome: It was discovered that two booksellers there privately sold several pamphlets against the authority of the Holy See, and against celibacy, the works of that pretended Febronius, the real author of which had made

made a solemn abjuration of them ; and the dissertations of a learned German, named Eybel, as attractive by their contents as by their titles : *What is the pope ? What is a cardinal ? What is a bishop ?* The two delinquents were brought before the Holy Office, did penance in the audience chamber, received a blow with a stick at each of the verses of the 51st psalm, recited in their presence, and paid a fine of five hundred crowns to the treasury of the *propaganda*, which professed maxims somewhat different from those they wished to disseminate. This noise served only to bring into greater vogue the pamphlets which gave so much alarm, excited a degree of interest in favour of the booksellers, and much indignation against their persecutors.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *Sequel of the Pope's Disputes with the Emperor.*

**BUT** Pius VI. had vexations far more poignant to experience from that prince, whom he considered *his friend*. In the first place, before the end of this year, a month of which he had passed in intimacy with him, he learned that Joseph II. was about to deprive all the churches of his dominions of their landed estates. Pius VI., armed with all the weapons of the Gospel, wrote to him a letter, in which he quoted the sacred scriptures, invoked the sacred apostles, cited the sacred canons, reminded him of his promises, which, alas ! he had also considered *sacred*.—"What, would your majesty then prove that you had no regard for my advice, or at least that it has been soon forgotten ! Where then are those protestations of attachment to the purity of religion, those orthodox principles which your majesty professes, &c. &c." This long and pathetic letter was dated the 3d of August. Ten days after, Joseph returned a dry and laconic answer.—"The reports which alarm you are false ; and, without searching into the texts of the holy scriptures, which are subject to various interpretations and explanations, I feel within me a monitor that instructs me, as a legislator and as a protector of religion,

“ religion, what it is fit I should do, or what I should omit ;  
 “ and with the just and upright disposition which I know I  
 “ possess, this monitor can never lead me into error.”

Such an answer was certainly not a favourable omen. But Pius VI., faithful to the advice which Jesus Christ gave to his disciples, to make themselves like unto children, was, like them, easily alarmed, easily re-assured, passing rapidly from chagrin to serenity of mind, from dejection to hope. He could not be persuaded that the *incomparable* Joseph II. meant to deceive him. “ Oh, no !” said he ; “ but his  
 “ ministers have altered the substance of what we had  
 “ together agreed upon.”—And it was in the midst of these subjects of alarm that he held this consistory, and delivered that discourse of which we have already spoken. His exterior, in public, corresponded with that security which he was desirous should obtain credit ; but his temper, which he could repress when he was exhibiting himself, broke out in private. To the people of his household he was impatient, passionate even to brutality, and rude in his conversation ; he who affected all the forms of urbanity, who used the purest and most elegant language in his prepared speeches, the style of which breathed mildness, charity, and all the Christian virtues. Even cardinal Pallavicini did not escape his rough behaviour. Convinced of the inutility of his advice, he in the end was silent, as were the rest of the Sacred College. Bernis himself kept upon the reserve. He continued to receive from the pope proofs of affection and confidence ; but he knew him to be imprudent, he saw him under the influence of perfidious advisers, misled either by fanaticism or ambition. Since his return from Vienna, his principal confidants were the Ex-jesuit Zaccaria, and the cardinal Gerdyl ; who from that period, looking forward to the papacy, leaned towards the Jesuits.

Pius VI. affected a particular friendship for cardinal des Lances, formerly one the most violent antagonists of the defunct society, and now become one of its warmest partisans. It was in the intercourse of these suspicious friends that he imbibed his hopes and his rules of conduct. Little susceptible of durable impressions, after having grieved for a while, he consoled himself : his health had not suffered from this combination of circumstances, which would have fretted any other person to death. It was his wish to reign and to live a long time ; and those who watched him closely,  
 clearly

clearly saw that, as long as the *dogma* was not openly attacked, he would patiently endure every thing else.

He therefore also bore with that constant apathy, which has attended him even in these latter times, the suppression of all the mendicant orders in the hereditary states; the subjection of all the religious orders to the authority of the bishops; and, what must have appeared still more painful, a new edict of the emperor, which took from the *datario* the nomination to all the bishoprics of the Milanese and of Mantua. Joseph, entirely taking off the mask, called himself in this edict *supreme guardian of the church, and administrator of all its temporal effects*. What these expressions meant and foreboded was not misunderstood at Rome. Pius VI. alone appeared not to perceive their tendency.

At the same time, the emperor suppressed all the useless convents, applied their revenues to the expenses of the state; took upon himself the nomination to all benefices which should fall vacant during the months reserved for the pope; restricted the prerogatives and the jurisdiction of the nuncio, &c. &c. And these examples (which would have been so scandalous at any other period, and, a century before, have occasioned schisms, insurrections, and perhaps a civil war) were imitated by several princes of the empire, by some electors, and even by the elector of Treves, whom the pope had found so submissive at the time of his passing through Augsbourg. Every thing announced that the reign of the pontiff of Rome was drawing near its end.

The principal, nay the sole object, for some time, of the solicitude of the pope, the *dogma*, an obscure word, subject to so many interpretations, was not as yet directly attacked. One only of the ordinances of the emperor could lead the timid or fanatic catholics to think it in danger. This was his edict concerning toleration, which was dated in 1781, and which Joseph himself, enlightened by experience, had in some respects modified. This subject had been agitated more than once in his conferences with Pius VI., who was fearful of seeing audacious heresy, by the means of this protecting edict, gradually invade the domain of the catholic church. Joseph had endeavoured to reassure him, but had met with little success. He had given him, towards the end of the year 1782, so  
many

many causes of chagrin, that he thought it his duty to address him a few lines of consolation at the beginning of the following year. He therefore wrote to him in a friendly style, which very well answered its purpose, that this edict concerning toleration, which had so much alarmed him, had occasioned scarcely any apostacy; that he had taken measures to prevent there being as little as possible; that he was in hopes of thus coming to an amicable arrangement with him upon several other points. These few words, for some time, restored the credulous pontiff to tranquillity; but it was of little duration.

Pius VI., encouraged by this sort of invitation, entered into a regular correspondence with Joseph: he wrote him confidential letters, relying much upon this means of stopping him in his career of reform, which the emperor ran with more ardour than ever. The pontiff thought that the mischief was increasing; it was therefore necessary to recur to some effectual remedy. *I shall explain myself*, said he, to the ministers of France and Spain, who now found him a little more willing to take advice. They represented to him, that, by writing familiarly to the emperor, he would commit himself, without obtaining any thing; to this he answered with ingenuous warmth: "But it is necessary that we let him know what we think, in such manner as we can, that we may have nothing to reproach ourselves with, either before God or man; that if the emperor should think proper to laugh at us, *it would be the worse for him, as it has been to so many others*: we must not, however, for that reason, neglect our duty. Of this we are assured, that these reproaches can never irritate him, as he hears every thing quietly, whatever it may be, *and does afterwards as he pleases*." The persons with whom he was holding this conversation did not know whether to complain or to laugh at his simplicity. They saw that he was in a critical situation, Joseph II., firm in his plan, had nominated the prelate Visconti to the archbishopric of Milan, without the concurrence of the Holy See. Nothing was more simple, or more reconcileable with true catholicism; but nothing, at the same time, was more derogatory to the before-received usages, or more contrary to the pretensions of the court of Rome, which construed these usages into rights. It was not without the greatest repugnance that Pius VI. confirmed this nomination; but he was

anxious to prevent a schism, of which the emperor had not the smallest apprehension. The pope's friends advised him to relieve himself by an expedient that might conciliate every thing. Answer the emperor, said they, that upon his recommendation, M. Visconti will be preconised archbishop of Milan at the first consistory. The pope, upon this occasion, was unusually obstinate : he sent to the emperor no longer one of those friendly and confidential letters, which had been so fruitless, and which Joseph ridiculed among those about him, made public some passages, and even caused others to be printed, but wrote a true brief, in which he spoke the antiquated language of the head of the church. He would have done much better in following the advice of Bernis and chevalier Azara. The letter was sent back to him from Vienna, without a single word of answer. He was in despair, when an event which he expected, but which he did not believe so near, occurred to console his vanity, and made some rays of hope gleam on his pontifical heart.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### *The Emperor's Journey to Italy.*

**T**O an ardent mind, and a violent disposition, Joseph II. joined more goodness and justice than was generally supposed in Europe. Persevering to obstinacy in the plans which he had once adopted, he did not allow himself to be stopped by any of the little considerations that render so many of them abortive in others. He was not afraid of giving disquietude to those who might suffer from his measures ; but he was not above bestowing upon them such unimportant consolations as he thought compatible with his dignity. He had an inordinate desire of celebrity. It was his wish that the attention of Europe might be constantly fixed upon him. He possessed an activity of body and mind which consumed him, and accelerated his death. Two circumstances made him fond of travelling : first, because distrustful of others, and having full confidence



dence in himself; he did not imagine that he was master of any thing but what had come under his own eyes; and in the next place, he wished to render himself the object of general admiration for his talents, which were at once both brilliant and solid; for his learning, which was extensive, and for his external plainness, which pretty well concealed his pride. He had promised Pius VI. to return his visit. He was not willing to sacrifice any of his ideas; but he did not make the torments he caused him a matter of sport. In short, he wished to evince that he was not more easily to be shaken, when in close conference, than at a distance; not more in his philosophical court than in the centre of superstitious Italy. He knew that his late reforms caused a great sensation at Rome, and were there talked of in a style somewhat like threats. He was desirous of shewing that he knew how to brave storms of every kind. His austere chancellor of state, the prince of Kaunitz, firm, haughty, and inflexible, encouraged him in his perseverance in respect to the Ecclesiastical See, and expressed himself, on the subject of the resistance of the bishop of Rome, with greater harshness than even the emperor himself. He had said very publicly, that if Pius VI. refused to preconise the archbishop of Milan, he would assemble the bishops of Lombardy, and, according to the practice of the primitive church, would cause to be conferred by them the canonical institution to such individuals as the emperor had appointed: that if the court of Rome should persist in this refusal, it would cause a rupture with that government. Such was the situation of the court of Vienna with respect to the Holy See in the month of December. The emperor's minister at Rome was cardinal Herzan, a well-meaning man, but weak and timid, and frightened at the task which had been assigned him. Unsteady and wavering, between his duty as a member of the Sacred College, and that imposed upon him by his situation, he consulted, hesitated, and trembled; when an incident, which happened altogether unexpectedly, occurred to relieve him, for a time at least, of his embarrassment.

The emperor left Vienna on the 6th of December, after having named prince Kaunitz director-general of all the current affairs, and announced to all the ambassadors at his court that he was going to set out upon a journey *which he considered as necessary*. The only circumstance from which a probable conjecture could be formed as to the object of his

journey, was, that he carried with him several of the acts relative to his disputes with the court of Rome. He took his route by Clagenfurt, where he spent several hours with the archduchess Mary-Anne; crossed the Tyrol, Mantua, and Bologna, and on the 18th arrived at Florence. The king of Sweden, who was then travelling under the name of count de Haga, happened to be at that city at the same time, and was about to proceed to Rome. This having been communicated to Pius VI., he had sent a courier to meet him. Joseph, who had a strong propensity to things out of the common road, and was disposed to play a trick upon Gustavus, for whom he had no great regard, set out some hours before him, met the courier, passed himself for the count de Haga, and under that name entered Rome on the afternoon of the 23d December. He alighted at the house of his minister, who, in his extreme surprise, contemplated him as his deliverer, rather than as his sovereign.

Joseph had not been at Rome since 1769. Among the persons he had there known, the chevalier Azara, who was then agent of the court of Spain, had particularly attracted his attention. He had conceived the most favourable opinion of his sagacity, energetic character, and all the other qualities which he has since displayed. Without making himself known to any person, he wrote to the Spanish minister, requesting a conference with him that very evening, and begging him to fix upon one of the theatres at Rome as a rendezvous. The chevalier Azara had boxes at every public place: he sent the emperor all the keys of them, desiring him to make his choice, and promising to visit them all, one after another, till he found him. In the mean time, the emperor had himself conducted, by his minister, to the pope's apartments. The news of his arrival had not yet reached the Vatican, where that of the king of Sweden was only known, who every moment was expected to make his appearance. All of a sudden the cardinal Pallavicini was informed that the emperor was arrived. The cardinal could hardly believe it: the pope was struck with a surprise bordering upon terror. Every preparation was making to give him a proper reception; when Joseph, in his uniform, appeared at the door of the holy father's closet.

Pius VI., although thunder-struck at so abrupt a visit, received him with every token of satisfaction. They held a pretty long, but vague conference, and afterwards went together

together to St. Peter's church. The pope offered the emperor a praying-desk by the side of his own. Joseph, who could affect simplicity to admiration, modestly declined that honour, and knelt a little behind the pontiff. They parted soon after. "This church," said the emperor to the pope, "is not the proper place for compliments, permit me to go" and visit your museum." The pope's two nephews accompanied him thither; but the appointment which he had made with the minister of Spain interested him much more. He quitted every thing to repair to the box he had chosen, where he was soon joined by the chevalier Azara. Joseph II. was exceedingly vexed at this first conversation being interrupted by several intruders, eager to pay their court to him, and who were very coldly received. The king of Sweden was of the number, and was no better treated than the rest. *Good night, count*, said the emperor abruptly to him; and immediately after left the box, followed by the chevalier Azara, with whom he paid his respects to some Roman ladies that were present at the representation, and hastily returned the visit he had received from the king of Sweden: impatient to escape from the uninteresting crowd, and to resume the thread of his conversation with the Spanish minister, he hurried him into a retired place, where they passed some hours *tête-à-tête*.

It is since known, what the credulous Pius VI. was far from doubting, that in this conference Joseph had unfolded, with great heat, a plan that was about to astonish all Europe. He intended no less than to break entirely with the court of Rome. Joseph had foreseen and combined every thing: he was sure of the consent and concurrence of thirty-six bishops of his dominions. The *dogma*, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, were to remain untouched; but he was to withdraw his subjects from that pontifical supremacy, which was of no benefit to the essence of religion, and was only calculated to produce civil disturbances, and, perhaps, to recall the fury of fanaticism. In his opinion the church was a branch of the state, and it was the duty of a sovereign to subject it to temporal laws, and hold its ministers in the same dependence as other subjects. He could no longer acknowledge the authority of Rome; he laughed at her thunders, which had in former times overthrown the world, but which at present could only impose upon children and old women. The papists called him a schismatic, which gave him little uneasiness.

uneasiness. The churches would be less rich, the priests more exemplary, the monks far less numerous; the benefit would be general; it would promote public tranquillity, morality, and even the cause of religion itself. Joseph II., it is said, never was more eloquent, more determined, or displayed more, than on this occasion, the strength of his genius and extent of his knowledge.

The chevalier Azara, who had listened with attention, and without interruption (for this was the manner of carrying on a conversation with Joseph II.), at length obtained a hearing. He had no small difficulty to make him feel the inconveniences of so precipitate a resolution. It was not, said he, yet indispensable; the noise that it would make might produce disagreeable consequences even to the emperor himself. If he had no fears from the fanaticism of Rome, was not that which prevailed in a great part of his own dominions to be dreaded? The pope was obstinate, because he was ill-advised; but was it not possible to make him alter his opinion? Could the emperor not attain his ends at less expence? Was it not necessary to reserve violent remedies for evils altogether incurable? &c. &c.

These arguments, from a man whom the emperor esteemed, and whose principles and intentions could not be suspected, appeared to make a considerable impression upon his mind. He broke off the conference with the most conciliatory disposition. Few persons were at that time acquainted with his sentiments on his arrival at Rome. It appeared even that he did not disclose them to cardinal de Bernis, for whom he had, in other respects, great affection and esteem; but he could not explain himself to a prince of the church as freely as to a lay minister, who was neither likely to have the same interests nor the same prejudices. Except in this he treated the cardinal with the greatest attention, and reposed in him a confidence which the other might have conceived to be unlimited. "Were you not much surprised," said he, "at my unexpected arrival at Rome?"—"Undoubtedly," replied the cardinal.—"I did not wish the Romans to believe that they could intimidate me, and that I was unable to answer the arguments contained in a letter which the pope lately wrote me, and which I sent back to him because it was an improper one for me to receive, and was not at all calculated to make me alter my resolution; for I never deviate from a plan which I have adopted upon mature reflection."

“ reflection. Another motive of my journey to Rome was  
 “ to return the long visit which the pope paid me at Vienna.  
 “ *I have a regard for the person of Pius VI. : he is a good kind*  
 “ *of man.* You would laugh if you could hear what passes  
 “ at our conferences : he often grows warm, and even  
 “ sometimes get angry ; I let him go on his own way ; while  
 “ I keep my temper, and adhere to my determination. I  
 “ know very well that he would now give me the indult  
 “ that he refused me for the nomination to the archbishopric  
 “ of Milan, and to all the consistorial benefices of Lom-  
 “ bardy ; but I will not accept as a present a grant which  
 “ belongs to me by the right of sovereignty. I am not to  
 “ blame if my predecessors have been negligent or too  
 “ timid. I asked the pope for this indult out of respect,  
 “ and not as a favour. He refused it to me in consequence  
 “ of bad advice ; and yet a similar indult for Corsica was  
 “ granted, without hesitation, to Lewis XV.”

The cardinal endeavoured to pacify him, and to make him sensible that there was some difference between the present case and that which he quoted ; that Pius VI. was perhaps excusable in persisting in the preservation of the rights of which he had found the Holy See in possession.—“ My resolution is fixed,” replied Joseph with warmth, “ and I should be sorry if the pope should compel me to certain extremities.” . . . (He here stopped, the chevalier Azara had heard him say more) ; then continuing the conversation : “ At the bottom, I must repeat it, the pope is a  
 “ *very good kind of man* ; he does not even want for sense ;  
 “ but he is not aware that times are altered. I shall not  
 “ hurry myself ; but still less will I recede.”

During the six days that Joseph remained at Rome, he had several conferences of this sort, as well with the cardinal de Bernis as with the chevalier Azara. He had also one with the pope, which was very long and extremely animated. Each with warmth set forth what he called *his rights*. Pius VI. admitted that he had not been able to succeed in making him a convert ; but Joseph had taken good care to flatter his vanity, at the same time that he was vexing his heart ; and when they parted, the pope was more delighted than ever with the emperor. The great question between them, above all others, was the nomination to the archbishopric of Milan, and to all the consistorial benefices of Lombardy. Joseph had come to Rome perfectly determined

mined not to receive the indult which he had chosen to ask for, and which had been refused him : however, the solicitations of the ministers of France and Spain staggered his resolution. " Well," said he to them, when he was ready to set off for Naples, " I shall have no objection to " accept' this indult, but on condition that it shall be irrevocable, and drawn up in such a manner as to appear " that I have accepted it solely out of friendship for the " pope."

Joseph set off for Naples on the 29th of December, leaving cardinal Herzan full authority to sign an agreement, in which the pope should give up to the emperor the nomination to the bishoprics of Lombardy, *in conformity to the inherent right of sovereignty.*

It may be truly said that this journey of the emperor to Rome was much more advantageous to the Holy See, than that of Pius VI. had been to Vienna ; and that it served to prevent a rupture. Joseph had arrived with the most hostile intentions. But the representations of the cardinal de Bernis, and particularly those of the chevalier Azara, whose prudence, while he appreciated the usurpations of the court of Rome, dreaded the storms which always accompany even the most desirable changes ; more deliberate reflections upon the consequences of the overthrow, the signal of which he was about to give ; perhaps, even some emotions of kindness for this old pontiff, who was not personally deserving of ill-will, but had considerable claims to compassion, calmed this first effusion of violence. Each of the two adversaries displayed, in the battle they fought, a mixture of firmness and condescension ; and each thought that he had come off with honour. Had they not been personally acquainted, a rupture would have been inevitable. However, there were some pretty warm disputes between them, when the emperor, on his return from Naples, again passed several days at Rome. They contended about the form of this agreement, which had been almost entirely settled previous to their separation. Joseph himself drew up another. Pius VI. thinking that sufficient attention was not paid to the honour of the Holy See, refused to accede to it. On this occasion Joseph could not repress his ill-humour, and pettishly putting up the rough draught of his compact: *What need have we of agreements,* said he ; *we are friends, and shall always be so ; and each of us will do in his dominions whatever he*

*he thinks proper.* The pope had a moment's courage.—*Very well,* replied he, *if your majesty has the archbishop of Milan consecrated without the canonical institution, all intercourse with this prelate shall be broken off, and his church shall be treated like that of Utrecht.*—He was not aware of the danger he ran by pushing the emperor home. Joseph, however, appeared a little disconcerted. He again found himself in the dilemma which the prudence of his counsellors had made him avoid. After a moment's reflection he took out his draught, corrected it, descanted upon it, and even disputed with some warmth; and at length the two negotiators themselves drew up in Latin the compact that was to terminate their quarrels. It was immediately fairly transcribed, copied, and interchanged. But these two illustrious personages, while encroaching upon the functions of their chancery, had suffered some schoolboys mistakes to escape them in their Latin production. They agreed that it should be corrected; and Joseph received a copy on the 20th of January, the eve of his departure.

In the three conferences they held together, the pope had the prudence not to speak to the emperor of the letter returned in so rude a manner; and Joseph was pleased with his silence. He, however, embarrassed him exceedingly, by conversing with him about one of his projects which he proposed to carry into immediate execution. He wished to have in his dominions several vicars-general; and in order to provide for their support, he told the pope that he meant to appropriate to himself the tythes, and some other revenues that the neighbouring bishops possessed in Austria. Pius VI. ventured to say to him with firmness: *they will refuse to accede to this arrangement.*—*Very well,* replied the emperor, *I will find means to make them give me their consent.* We shall see in the sequel that he kept his word.

With the exception of these little storms, the emperor and the pope were very well satisfied with each other. Pius VI., whose weaknesses the emperor flattered with his usual address, took a pleasure in relating the particulars of their conversations. By his own account, the emperor had shewn him the greatest confidence, and had communicated to him the most important secrets respecting the principal cabinets and the anecdotes of the sovereigns of Europe. It was impossible for any man to have a greater command of words, or more wit. *In a word,* added he, *the emperor* says

*says what he pleases, but not always what he thinks.* In matters that did not concern the prerogatives of the Holy See, the pope was upon the most familiar footing with him. One day, when Joseph was speaking to him about persons that he had known belonging to the church, he began a pompous eulogium upon cardinal Buoncompagni, legate of Bologna, a man of merit, whom the pope, however, had never liked. He thought he could not better extol his uncommon capacity than by saying : *He is capable of governing an empire.* — *Well,* replied the pope, *take him then ; I will give him to you.* Nevertheless, he was obliged, some time after, to take him for himself. Although this journey of the emperor had cost Pius VI. some painful sacrifices, and had made him anticipate others, after having been very much disconcerted at his visit, he appeared exceedingly pleased at it in the end. He was at a loss how to make Rome sufficiently agreeable to *his friend*, Joseph II. He very seriously proposed to him to come and see him again, in order to be present at a canonisation. It is not said that Joseph seriously promised to return ; but it is well known that he took occasion, even at Rome, to amuse himself with his invitation.

On his first journey to the capital of the Christian world, he did not shew himself to so much advantage as in 1784. At both periods he displayed a persevering disposition, never losing sight of his object ; by turns polite or austere, according to circumstances ; always popular, and perfectly acquainted with the genius of the modern Romans, to which he adapted his conduct. On his second journey he appeared to follow this plan, but with still more address. Affecting a great simplicity of manners, he avoided ceremony, and shunned homage. But always flattering the caprices of the Romans, whose affection he courted, perhaps more through ambition than vanity, he frequented the assemblies, the public places, and even the churches. This latter attention, no doubt, appeared to him necessary, in order to do away the prejudices to which his quarrels with the pope had given birth. Pius VI. had the goodness to mistake his motive. He did not perceive that these attempts to gain popularity concealed projects which, had Joseph lived longer, might have become much more dangerous to the temporal authority of the court of Rome, than his reforms in ecclesiastical discipline were to the authority of the Holy See.



See. His endeavours among the Romans were so successful, that more than once he heard issue from their groups that cry of enthusiasm at which a more distrustful pontiff might have been alarmed : *Viva il NOSTRO imperatore !* Long live *our* emperor ! During this journey he made, to please them, an effort which must have cost him more than all the others, and which he had not made in 1769 ; he was generous, and even liberal. He visited several monuments and public establishments, and was not sparing of his presents. He distributed near thirty thousand florins in the hospitals, and among the people. In short, when he quitted Rome, on the 21st of January 1784, every body was satisfied with him, and nobody more so than the pope ;

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## CHAPTER XVII.

*The Emperor gives the Pope fresh Cause of Uneasiness.*

PIUS VI., however, had not surmounted all the obstacles which he was to experience from the court of Vienna. He had provisionally settled his principal difference with the emperor, in a manner less mortifying than he had reason to hope. He was congratulating himself on this triumph, for which he thought he was chiefly indebted to his dexterity and to the friendship with which he had contrived to inspire Joseph. " I chose," said he, " to give up to him the nomination to the great benefices of Lombardy, of which the Holy See was in the habit of disposing ; but at least the bishops thus nominated will always have recourse to me in order to obtain their bulls." Even in the opinion of the most rational cardinals this transaction still saved, in some degree, the honour of the court of Rome. But when the question was to carry it into execution in regard to the archbishop of Milan, new difficulties occurred, which the wise considered puerile, and to which it is astonishing that Joseph could have attached any importance. Four months were spent in settling the form in which the new prelate should be announced to the consistory. This was an indispensable

penfable formality, according to the customs of the Holy See. But, how to comply with it without offending the emperor? At length it was agreed that the pope should propofe for the archiepifcopal fee of Milan monfignor Visconti, *nominated by the emperor, by virtue of the amicable agreement made between his holinefs and that monarch*; and in this manner Pius VI. announced the nomination to the Sacred College. The remainder of the year 1784 paffed without any ferious altercation.

The following year was to the pope a new æra of difficulties on the part of Germany; but he himfelf was very imprudently the occafion of fome of them, by that rage for wifhing to extend every where the branches of his power, and by his inclination to retrieve a part of his loffes. He could not remain peaceably in poffeffion of the ground he had left, but afpired to new conquelts!

Without confulting the emperor, without thinking of the ecclefiaftical princes, he took a fancy to create a nunciature at the court of Munich, and confequently a new rival to the fpiritual authority of the prelates of Germany. Immediately the elector of Mayence, and the archbifhop of Saltzbourg complained bitterly to the emperor of this attack made upon their diocefan rights. The pope thus revived a very delicate queftion, upon which Jofeph II. had explained himfelf in a moft energetic manner. He answered the demands of the two archbifhops, by faying, “that the nuncios were “to be no more than mere envoys of the pope as a temporal “fovereign; but that he would never fuffer them to ex- “ercife in the empire, or at his court, any jurifdiction in “ecclefiaftical affairs.” The cardinal Herzan, his minifter at Rome, was charged to explain himfelf to that effect to the pope.

Pius VI. and his council were thunderftuck at this declaration, which they ought to have expected. But they well knew that nothing was to be obtained of Jofeph II. by refiftance. The pope answered his minifter in an ambiguous manner; that he could not give up the connexion which he had been defirous of eftablifhing with the elector of Bavaria; but that he had conceived himfelf entitled to delegate to another the authority concerning which there had been no difpute.

There was then at Rome a certain marquis Antici, a clever Italian, who, by dint of artifice and intrigue, had fucceeded

ceeded in acquiring a sort of consequence. He was accredited from the electors of Bavaria and Cologne as envoy to the Holy See. He was desirous of making a merit with the court of Munich, of procuring it a nuncio. This was a kind of relief for the catholic powers of the second rank. How great was the embarrassment of the prelate Antici, when one of his constituents, the elector of Cologne, as hostile as his brother the emperor to the prerogatives of the nunciature, enjoined him to oppose with all his might the innovation he had himself promoted! The pope, though very much vexed at the double disappointment, could not refrain from laughing on seeing the double plenipotentiary obliged to act, at the same time, two parts so contradictory! For, as Joseph II. said, Pius VI. was, at bottom, *a good kind of man*. He was not susceptible of any very great degree of feeling. Ill-humour, chagrin, affection, hatred, nothing in short, made upon him a lasting impression. His mind was very frequently agitated, but never deeply affected. Hence the numerous inconsistencies, and several of the calamities of his pontificate. Hence, to balance the account, that unalterable impassibility and that florid health which he has preserved in the midst of the most overwhelming difficulties.

In the month of October 1785, the nunciature experienced a mortal blow by an ordinance of the emperor, which deprived the nuncios in Germany of every kind of jurisdiction, and restored to the bishops all their antient rights. The elector of Cologne, who, as archbishop, was personally interested in this ordinance, hastened to publish it in his states, to the great mortification of the Ex-jesuits and all the advocates of the Holy See. The elector of Mayence, who had no nuncio at his court, but who dreaded the pretensions of the new nuncio of Munich, took, in his states, such measures as were conformable to the views of the emperor, and dried up one of the sources, to which the *datario* was going to apply under various pretences. Henceforth no more dispensations, no more foreign jurisdiction were to be exercised in Germany. The Holy See saw itself successively stripped of its absurd prerogatives and of its scandalous revenues; and the catholic princes, great and little, without foreseeing that, in other respects, they were acting contrary to their own interests, awoke the reason of the people, released them from their sacred chains, and prepar-

ed their minds for those changes which France has since operated with so much success.

The elector of Bavaria was the only prince of the empire that strove to oppose distinguished marks of good-will to the affronts which the court of Rome received from all the other parts of Germany. He welcomed Zoglio, the new nuncio, with all the magnificence of his court; at the same time announcing to his subjects that henceforth they were to apply to that nuncio, as they had before done to those of Vienna, Cologne, or Lucerne. But the four archbishops of Germany, those of Mayence, Cologne, Treves, and Saltzbourg, uttered loud cries against this innovation, and their ordinances spoke the language of the emperor. Zealous partisans of spiritual authority, they were equally ready to claim it for themselves, and to contend for it with usurpers. They therefore most positively forbade their diocesans to apply, *under any pretence*, either to Zoglio the nuncio, or to Pacca the new nuncio, who had just succeeded Bellisani at Cologne. The two nuncios durst not resist. They had recourse to the pope, who had involved them in this dilemma, from which it was incumbent upon him to extricate them. Pius VI. at that time employed, as his principal secretary, the Ex-jesuit Zaccaria, of whom we have already spoken more than once. He was a fanatic who possessed that sort of talent, or at least that kind of erudition which qualified him for such a task. He immediately began to draw up a learned statement, in which, had he been left to himself, he would have proved, in an *irrefragable* manner, no doubt, that in *all times* the Holy See had possessed *the right* of sending, *at its pleasure*, and *wheresoever it thought proper*, nuncios invested with full power, without any interference, on that account, on the part of the diocesan bishops and archbishops.

Notwithstanding the rapidity of his eloquent pen, Zaccaria was anticipated by the four archbishops. They formed a congress at Ems, near Coblenz, and boldly deliberated on questions which the Holy See had till then considered as appertaining exclusively to its jurisdiction; such as the precepts for fasting, the obstacles to marriage, the organisation of chapters, &c. The elector of Treves, more scrupulous than his colleagues, would have wished not to perplex that pontiff, whom he had received at Augsbourg with so many marks of affection and respect: he therefore made a  
few

few difficulties, but at length submitted. Several bishops of Germany, and even some secular princes, in other respects rather devoted to the court of Rome, adopted the principles of the congress at Ems; and Pius VI., in these times already so difficult, promoted, or suffered blind advisers to promote, a storm which had an effect directly contrary to that he had so fully expected. Every one examined questions to which the public attention was called, and which, for political reasons at least, should have been left undecided. People thus became familiarised to a sort of independence, which, a century before, would have appeared to border upon schism, or even upon sacrilege. Thus the court of Rome seemed to call in the assistance of those who were to undermine the unstable foundations of its throne; and these ecclesiastical princes, encouraged in their boldness by the example and advice of a philosophic emperor, accelerated that great crisis which was to overthrow this throne, and reach even themselves. They could not have calculated better for the progress of reason, nor worse for their own interests.

On this occasion the court of Rome committed one imprudence after another. Instead of endeavouring to support its pretensions at a period when the intelligent were shocked at them, when even the devotees began to suspect them to be bordering upon usurpation, it ought to have confined itself, agreeably to the advice of Bernis and Azara, and that which would have been given by Benedict XIV., to the enjoyment of those rights in which it was quietly left in possession; but, like a desperate gambler, it exposed itself to total ruin, in order to retrieve a few trifling losses, or dispute some litigious ground.

Will it be believed that, instead of yielding to this assemblage of resistance, it wished to employ tenacity, and even violence, as in those times when the most absurd pretensions were authorised by the blind docility of nations? Unskilful in the choice of its agents, it had seen the nuncio Zoglio irritate, by its claims, the archbishop of Saltzbourg, who was a Colloredo, son of the vice-chancellor, and who, consequently, was more certain than any other person of the emperor's support.

Its nuncio Pacca behaved with still more effrontery. He bethought himself of publishing, in his nunciature, a manifesto, addressed to all the prelates and vicars of the elec-  
torate

torate of Cologne; and in which he *ordered them* not to acknowledge the dispensations for marriage, to certain degrees of consanguinity, that had been granted *without the indulgence of the pope*. The elector of Cologne, brother of the emperor, repressed this insolence, by *ordering*, in his turn, all those to whom copies of the manifesto had been addressed, by a *person calling himself a nuncio*, to send them back under the same cover, and to procure a certificate of their having done so from the different post-masters. The elector of Mayence, being informed that the vicars of his archbishopric had also received the same orders from the nuncio, wrote to them, that he hoped they would hold in just abhorrence this impudent usurpation, the *sole object of which was to disturb the peace of their consciences*, and that they would send back to Cologne the manifestoes that had been transmitted to them by a *pretended nuncio*.

Even the chancery of the electorate of Treves could not but take offence at the boldness of the nuncio Pacca, and professed with energy that evident principle, that no person, *however pompous might be the title with which he was invested*, could exercise a legislative power in a foreign archbishopric. Thus the pious elector of Treves himself professed and propagated those very principles which philosophy afterwards employed with so much energy to destroy, at least in France, all the fabric of superstition.

The nuncio Pacca did not suffer himself to be awed by so much opposition. In spite of the sovereigns who would not acknowledge him, he continued to exercise the functions of nuncio, and endeavoured to excite fermentation in those countries where he yet found many credulous and timid persons. The archbishops of Germany addressed to the pope the most pressing demands, the most energetic protests. They could obtain no answer. The marquis Antici, cursing more than once his double character, was obliged to present to the court of Rome those acts so prejudicial to its authority; and, as it happens in similar cases, he was made responsible for their contents. The audiences he had were scenes of ill-humour and violent reproaches. His ambitious patience at length was worn out; and he renounced the title of plenipotentiary of an elector, whom he found it so difficult and so dangerous to represent.

The ecclesiastical electors persisted in their bold conduct in regard to the Holy See. The first among them in rank, the

the elector of Mayence, even went so far as to present to the emperor propositions which made the court of Rome tremble, and which, he asserted, were the expression of the wish of all the Germans. He therein said that those famous decretals of Isidorus, now universally allowed to be spurious, was the sole base on which rested the immunities of the court of Rome. He demanded the convocation of that new council, promised by it for upwards of two hundred years, and which was to exhaust the source of the riches it had usurped. Incessantly evading its promises, and frustrating the hope of the Germanic empire, it continued to violate the conditional compact that it had made with the princes of Germany; and the German people were therefore released from all their engagements towards it. The time was come for the Germans to make another use of all those sums which they sent to Rome for the pall of their archbishops, in order to devote them to the advancement of their own prosperity, and to the relief of the unfortunate, &c. A person might have thought himself on the eve of a new reformation. Three years after, the orators of the constituent assembly did not express themselves with more energy concerning the usurpations of the court of Rome. And it was an archbishop of Mayence who introduced this language! He did not suspect that he was thus preparing the public mind for that great concussion, which, by shaking Europe and the catholic religion, was, from enterprise to enterprise, to lead to the secularisation of a great part of his own states.

Such a doctrine could not but be pleasing to Joseph. But, not less bold, he was more prudent than those prelates who, after all, were pleading their own cause, rather than injuring the Holy See. Still following the route he had traced for himself, he proceeded with a firm, though not a hasty step. He favoured the wishes of the ecclesiastical princes, but thought it his duty to retard their completion. Perhaps he chose, at all events, to reserve to himself the honour of initiation, and rather chose to give, in his own dominions, examples to imitate, than concur, as chief of the empire, in a reform of which he would not have had all the merit.

He likewise signalised the year 1786 by measures which afflicted the court of Rome. The prelates had till then made an essential part of the states of Austria. He excluded them, and substituted commendatory abbés, who were entirely of his own choice. He secularised certain religious orders; that of the Camaldulcs, for instance, and suppressed

most of the convents of some others. He stripped the more opulent of their estates, and of their treasures, both sacred and profane. Their finest pictures were taken to add to the riches of his gallery. Such of their books as were deserving of that honour, were placed in the famous library of Vienna: the rest were abandoned to grocers, or served to make cartridges. All their valuable furniture, whatever had been its use before, was sold by public auction, and the sums it produced were placed in the *bank of religion*. It was not an empty name that he had given to this bank, which was wholly devoted to the payment of pensions to the religious orders of both sexes who no longer lived in communities, to the support of several new bishops and vicars, a great number of whom he established, and to the maintenance of schools and pious foundations. Idleness, deprived of its means, must have grieved at these transformations, at which blind fanaticism must have been enraged, while they could not but be approved of by dispassionate orthodoxy. But the Holy See, finding its satellites successively impoverished, and their number decreased, was deeply afflicted. No vain fear, no personal consideration affected the emperor's resolutions. He had made a regulation, that no bishop of his dominions should hold two considerable benefices at a time. The cardinal Migazzi, archbishop of Vienna, was also administrator of a rich bishopric in Hungary. He was obliged to make his election. Having decided for the archbishopric of Vienna, he sent to the pope the resignation of his other benefice. Pius VI., who was silently suppressing so many chagrins, sent back this instrument to the emperor, without accompanying it with any observation. But shortly afterwards there occurred a circumstance which awoke his impatience, and had nearly involved him in a very serious quarrel with Joseph.

That emperor, still persevering in his claim to be the supreme administrator of the church in his dominions, had recently erected the bishopric of Laybach, in Carniole, into an archbishopric, and nominated to it count Charles de Herberstein. By virtue of the last agreement, concluded with respect to the archbishopric of Milan, it was necessary that the pope should, in point of form, censure that nomination. He had the boldness to refuse his concurrence; and what were the titles of the count de Herberstein to the disgrace of the holy father? Four years before, in a pastoral exhortation, he had promulgated maxims which the court of Rome could not pardon. He had dared to say: *Every person is at liberty to choose the religion he likes best.* The pope required,



required, as a condition of count de Herberstein obtaining his confirmation, that he should retract these *pernicious maxims*. Joseph and his prime-minister at first took great offence at this strange pretension. The old prince de Kaunitz waited himself upon the nuncio Cayrara, and, in his usual severe tone, said: "The resistance of the pope, upon this occasion, would raise an insurmountable barrier between the See of Rome and the dominions of his Imperial majesty, and for ever put an end to the respect which the emperor hitherto had for the consequence of the pope. Nothing could in future prevent him, of his own Imperial authority, from making every ecclesiastical arrangement, as was the usage in the first ages of Christianity."

The nuncio, terrified, immediately dispatched a courier to Rome. Never had he so unpleasant news to announce; and whether from want of address on his part, or injustice on the part of the pope, on him was thrown all the blame. This was undoubtedly one of the causes of the prejudice which Pius VI. always had against him, and which he manifested till the day of his fall. The representations of so disagreeable an interpreter served only to confirm him in his resistance: he had, what was scarcely to be expected of him at that time, the courage to write to the emperor a letter, in which he declared the new archbishop a *heretic*, and proved, from several passages in his pastoral discourse, that he deserved that title. Joseph, who might have been irritated at this obstinacy, manifested as much patience as his minister. He permitted the prelate to send to Rome explanations of the exceptionable passage, but with an injunction not to retract a single word.

This sort of respect served only to render the pope more obstinate. Under different pretences, he postponed the confirmation of the bishop of Laybach; and before the end of the year death came and delivered him from this formidable adversary. Thus was the dispute terminated; but the year following the emperor made the pope and the Sacred College pay dear for this casual triumph. Resentment seemed to animate his zeal for reform.

He began by giving his unqualified approbation to the conduct of the four archbishops, and expressed a desire that it might be adopted by the other prelates. About the same time there appeared at Vienna, undoubtedly with his consent, a publication, inviting all the bishops of Germany to make a common cause with the archbishops; and several of them, with the bishop of Spire at their head, complained to the emperor that they were not summoned to the congress at

Ems.

Ems. Joseph wished to prevent the division which might take place on this occasion between the two classes of prelates; and, instead of replying to the long and lamentable representations of Pius VI., respecting this war declared against the Holy See by all the superior Germanic clergy, wrote to the bishops, exhorting them to concur in the salutary plan which had been conceived by the archbishops; and the Aulic council passed a decree, dictated by the emperor, by which, in opposition to the proceedings of the nuncio Pacca, they annulled the insolent circular letter which he had dared to distribute, and, blaming the condescension of the elector of Bavaria, ordered him not to suffer the nuncio Zoglio, who was received at his court, to exercise any jurisdiction in the states of Juliers and Berg.

The court of Rome was very much affected by this combination, which it saw forming through all Germany, to attack prerogatives that prescription at least ought, in its opinion, to render incontestable, and which appeared to threaten it with mortifications still more cruel. A national council might deprive it of its still remaining rights. So many sovereigns, so many individuals of all ranks, prelates, even interested in the support of its authority, transforming themselves into philosophers! What was to become of religion in a contest with philosophy!

It was not, however, from Germany that the court of Rome had then to dread all these calamities. The jealousy, the rivalry of powers, prevented that co-operation which might accelerate the overthrow of its authority, already so much weakened. The four archbishops persisted in their plan of independence and reform, and counteracted the two nuncios in all their attempts; but the bishops, although nearly unanimous in their claims to a sort of independence of their metropolitans, were very dilatory in entering into the measures of the latter. During these transactions the French revolution took place; that revolution so bold, so rapid in its execution; that revolution, in short, which occasioned a suspension of so many projected enterprises, overturned the most solid plans, reconciled little animosities, set aside little rivalities, and, upon the aspect of common danger, united minds most disposed to discordance.

Joseph II., however, pursued to the end of his reign his irresistible inclination for reform. Publications, favourable to his maxims, were either composed by his command, or circulated with his permission. He ordered that, at least in some of his dominions, the sacraments should be celebrated in the vulgar tongue. He granted to the protestants

tants in Hungary a great extension of his edict of toleration. He allowed a calvinistical church to be established in the very city of Constance, which three centuries before had seen the unfortunate John Hus expiate in the flames his principles, the precursors of the reformation so fatal to the court of Rome. But it was particularly in the Low Countries that his zeal was displayed, that he experienced active resistance, and that he occasioned *his friend* the pope the most bitter chagrin.

• It is not our intention to trace here all the innovations which he wished to introduce, with rather an inconsiderate ardour, in the Austrian Netherlands, still less ripe than the hereditary dominions of Germany for philosophical reforms, more disposed to revolt, more difficult to repress. It will be sufficient to mention that he there experienced opposition not only from the people and the clergy, but also from the states of these countries, which yet retained a shadow of liberty against the invasions of despotism. They were already prepared for disaffection, by grievances purely political. They manifested it openly when the emperor would interfere with the confraternities, seminaries, processions, pilgrimages; in a word, with every thing which they considered as *religion*. They found powerful supporters, or rather ardent imitators, in the higher clergy, and particularly in cardinal Frankenberg, archbishop of Malines. The pope had then for a nuncio at Brussels a signor Zondadari, a fanatical and impetuous man, who did not omit this opportunity of making a figure. He pleaded with warmth the cause of the court of Rome, which Joseph had disregarded in his innovations in matters of discipline. On these questions, rendered so delicate by the circumstances of the moment, a discussion took place, in which Pius VI., not yet undeceived, hoped to triumph; for one of his pretensions was to possess and display the talents of a great theologian; talents considered very unimportant by Joseph in ordinary times, but which could not but be odious to him when employed to counteract his views. Zondadari, however, hawked about and commented upon the learned memoirs of his infallible sovereign, and encouraged the Brabanters in their resistance.

Joseph, being then subject to difficulties of more than one kind, took umbrage at the work, its author, and, above all, its commentator, and caused the nuncio Zondadari to be banished from Brussels, with forms not very respectful to the representative of the Holy See. Zondadari was obliged to retire to Liege, where he continued to carry on his intrigues

intrigues more secretly, but not with less success. The troubles which the establishment of the seminary of Louvain occasioned in Brabant, furnished him with fresh opportunities of inflaming the minds of the people, by the intervention of their priests; impotent efforts which Joseph despised. The vigour of his governor-general, comte Trautmansdorf, and his own firmness, made him triumph over the nuncios, prelates, and all the fanatics with which the Low Countries were infested.

In Germany, in the course of the year 1788, the same perseverance had the same result. The nuncios wished to continue their contest with the four archbishops; but the latter were united by interest. They had gone too far to recede; and had it not been for the events of the following year, it would have been impossible to foresee to what lengths they would have been carried by their opposition to the court of Rome. They saw themselves powerfully supported by the emperor, who transmitted to the diet of Ratisbon an Imperial decree, in which that court was very cavalierly treated. Joseph there stated, without reserve, that the violent manner in which the court of Rome and its nuncios had resisted his energetic admonitions, justified him in taking the most serious measures to render prevalent the incontestable principles which he professed, after the example of his predecessors, and that, in consequence, he invited the diet of the empire to deliberate upon this important subject.

This, however, was only a vain formality, which ought not to have greatly intimidated the Holy See. The pope, as well as the rest of Europe, knew the slowness of the deliberations of the Germanic congress, and the impotence of its laws. But this measure was supported by writings, in justification of the conduct of the four archbishops who opposed the claim of the court of Rome; and even these prelates did not confine themselves to a paper war and empty threats. They proved that they could dispense with the pope's interference in matters which they considered within their jurisdiction. The elector of Treves, of his own authority, released the monks from their vows. The elector of Cologne even permitted them to marry when they could offer good reasons for such a step. The pope at this time claimed a right to tithes of lands newly cleared. He ventured to intrust a secular prince with the collection of them in the electorate of Cologne. This prince had farmed them out to the subjects even of the elector. Such a bravado could not remain unpunished. These new farmers were immediately apprehended and put in prison. From that moment

moment the collection of the tithes, and the pope's pretensions, were entirely relinquished.

In all this affair between the nuncios and the four archbishops (an affair which would scarcely be deserving of a small place in the general picture of modern history, did it not serve to prove, on the one hand, the incurable obstinacy of the Italians, and, on the other, the tendency of the human mind towards all kinds of independence), Pius VI., as if led away by an evil genius that had conspired against the remains of his authority, heaped faults upon faults, which he expiated only by disappointments. Wrongs that were not more serious have since hurled him from his throne. And after that, let human prudence again predict *infallible* results, and from experience derive rules of conduct!

The quarrels of the nuncios, the troubles of the Low Countries, excited in a great measure by the Holy See, still continued when Joseph II. died. Had a real friendship subsisted between him and Pius VI., as both of them boasted, it must be admitted that in the one, as well as in the other, there was a great distinction to be made between the man and the sovereign, and that, whatever either of the two considered as his duty, has frequently prevailed over his private opinion.

Pius VI. having attained the pontifical throne with principles which, for a pope, appeared to be moderate, has experienced the fate of all those who long hold the reins of government. He became corrupted by the exercise of power. Flatterers had poisoned his disposition, and prepared him for the part that he has played in his latter years in a manner so odious to a portion of Europe, and so disastrous to himself. His fanaticism increased in proportion to the progress of philosophy, and led him to culpable imprudences, which rendered his fall as inevitable as it was merited.

However, about the end of the reign of Joseph, either through condescension towards that prince, or that his conscience reproached him with having concurred in inflaming the Low Countries for idle scholastic disputes, Pius VI. had tried his ascendancy over the superior clergy of these provinces, in order to bring them back to submission. Joseph II. did not reap the fruits of his good intentions, but was thankful for his efforts. At the beginning of 1790, his minister, cardinal Herzan, waited upon the pope. He came to consult him relative to the means of remedying the disturbances of the Low Countries, which were then carried to the greatest excess. The cardinal found Pius VI. occupied in a fervent prayer, and bathed in tears. Was he lamenting

ing the evils of which he was the author, or those of which he was threatened to be the victim; for this was a short time after the publication of the decrees of the national assembly of France against the clergy? The pope resumed a serene countenance on being informed of this mark of confidence of the emperor. We have more than once seen with what facility he passed from sorrow to joy, and what powerful motives of consolation he found in homages paid to his vanity! Flattered at seeing this obstinate and imperious emperor once invoke his mediation, he instantly wrote to the bishops of Belgium to press them to exert themselves in recalling their untractable flocks to obedience. The answer of the prelates to the brief of the pope was dispatched to Rome on the 8th of March 1790. It breathed a profound resentment for all the attacks that the emperor had made upon the liberties of Belgium, and a firm determination not again to submit to the yoke which the emperor had forced them to shake off; and the prelates, who called themselves the interpreters of the sentiments of the Belgic people, concluded their answer by requesting the pope himself to espouse their cause, in imitation of those powers with which that people had already formed connexions. Thus, unfortunate in all his enterprises, Pius VI., who was not always disinclined to do mischief, was unable to provide a remedy. Joseph II. had not the mortification of convincing himself of the impotence of his interceder, having died a few days before the departure of the letter of these Belgic bishops.

His successor, Leopold, seemed destined to restore to Belgium days of greater serenity; but it is well known that he did not long indulge that hope. No sooner was he seated on the Imperial throne, than he also announced dispositions more favourable to the clergy and the court of Rome. He even proved, by some acts, the sincerity of his promises. He restored to several bishops of the hereditary states the revenues of which Joseph had dispossessed them; and he re-established several ecclesiastical institutions which his brother had abolished. What was then passing in France proved to him, but too late, that the authority of sovereigns was connected with that of priests. But for this experience he would probably have carried upon the throne of Vienna that spirit of reform which he had displayed in Tuscany, and which, during fifteen years, had greatly tormented the pontificate of Pius VI., as we are about to see in the second part of this work.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

**HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL  
MEMOIRS**

OF

**PIUS THE SIXTH,**

AND OF

**HIS PONTIFICATE,**

**DOWN TO THE PERIOD OF HIS RETIREMENT INTO TUSCANY;**

CONTAINING

***CURIOUS AND INTERESTING PARTICULARS,***

DERIVED FROM THE

**MOST AUTHENTIC SOURCES OF INFORMATION,**

CONCERNING

**HIS PRIVATE LIFE,**

**HIS DISPUTES WITH THE DIFFERENT POWERS OF EUROPE,**

THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO

**THE SUBVERSION OF THE PAPAL THRONE—AND  
THE ROMAN REVOLUTION.**

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**TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.**

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HISTORICAL.

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL  
MEMOIRS OF PIUS VI.  
AND OF  
HIS PONTIFICATE.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

*Disputes between the Court of Rome and the Tuscan Government.*

WITH greater gentleness of manner and superior coolness of temper, Leopold professed nearly the same principles in administration as his brother: and it will ever be considered as a memorable circumstance in the history of the present century, that two brothers, two princes of that same house of Austria whose passions have so often thrown the world into confusion and increased the errors as well as the calamities of mankind, should in concert have undertaken, each within his own dominions, to banish degrading and oppressive prejudices, and partly to realise that hope, which has so often been disappointed, of seeing philosophy seated on the throne. Notwithstanding a few mistakes, such as must ever attend the first steps taken in a quite novel career, the reign of Leopold will ever be accounted one of the most supportable; and

VOL. II. B Tuscany,

Tuscany, indebted to him for her prosperity, will long bless his memory.

But, to produce those beneficial effects which she still enjoys, Leopold had to overcome many obstacles, to thwart many interests, consequently to create many malcontents. During several antecedent ages, the court of Rome, with her pretensions consecrated by the credulity of mankind, and the abuses introduced by her ambition cloked under the sacred veil of religion, stood in the way to oppose all those who attempted to illuminate and regenerate any portion of the human race. Leopold combated her with a perseverance which was finally crowned with the most complete success.

Scarcely was Pius the Sixth seated on the pontifical throne when he perceived that he should find in that prince a formidable enemy. In 1775, Leopold ordained that all ecclesiastical possessions situate in his states should thenceforward be subject to the same contributions as other property; and he fixed the age at which his subjects might be admitted into a religious order. In the following year he suppressed all hermits who had not privileged hermitages (privileged hermits!), and restrained them all from begging. This was little toward the accomplishment of the vast plan which he had in contemplation; but it was much for a beginning. The court of Rome sighed and murmured: that of Florence continued unshaken in its purpose: nor was this the only mortification that Pius was doomed to suffer from it.

How great was the alarm of that pontiff when, in 1778, he saw the grand-duke revive the ancient pretensions of Tuscany to the duchy of Urbino—collect information respecting the number of persons of both sexes in the different religious orders, and the amount of their revenues—enjoin them to give gratuitously the first elements of instruction to youth—oblige them to a strict observance of the rules of their respective institutions, a slow though sure mode of diminishing their number—exclude them from public places—and render their superiors responsible for any scandalous conduct of which they might be guilty, &c. It is a disgrace to human nature and to the christian religion that such prudent measures should at any time have been considered as innovations: but they were  
viewed

viewed as so many essays which presaged more serious reforms, and might therefore well alarm the Court of Rome.

Leopold, however, in accomplishing these reforms, was sometimes mistaken in his choice of the means and the instruments he employed. He was in search of a man, at once intrepid and enlightened, who, knowing the true limits which Christianity ought not to exceed, should purify without destroying it, and should co-operate with him in opening the eyes of his subjects without incurring the risk of too violently shocking their prejudices. For, though as much a philosopher as his brother, yet, more moderate in his philosophy, he saw that religion was a useful ally to the throne, that it furnished a support and a supplement to the temporal authority : he only wished that it should not prove its rival. But, to effect this great revolution without any convulsion, he stood in need of agents who should unite prudence with intrepidity. The men who are best qualified for such a task are rather those who shrink from the public eye than those who thrust themselves forward to view. His choice fell on one of the latter description.—Scipio Ricci, bishop of Pistoja.

That prelate was noted for his aversion to religious mummeries, as well as for his bold enterprising character. Fond of innovation rather than of reform, he would perhaps have established the reign of superstition in Tuscany if it had before been unknown. Finding it already established, its overthrow was become the object of his ambition ; and he pursued his plan with much greater zeal than discernment. After having successfully passed through his academic course in Tuscany, but not without some mortifications which had begun to sour his temper, he devoted himself to the ecclesiastical profession, and early announced a wish to act a conspicuous part in the world. He was proposed to the Holy See by the grand-duke as candidate for the bishopric of Pistoja, and repaired to Rome to solicit the issuing of the bulls customary on such occasions. There the persons in whose hands lay the distribution of spiritual favours subjected him to various difficulties, which irritated his irascible humour : and he returned to Florence highly dissatisfied

with the Court of Rome. His complaints, his projects of reform, were in perfect accord with the grand-duke's system : they fixed the attention of Leopold, who listened to him with complaisance, consulted him, and encouraged him in his reformatory ideas. Thus assured of his sovereign's approbation, he immediately went to try in his little diocese the experiment of his philosophic innovations. Leopold, who wished for arguments and examples in favour of his own system, suffered him to proceed. —Ricci now found himself possessed of extraordinary power, which he exercised in a manner that sometimes excited ridicule, and at others shocked the ideas of the public. He bestowed his attention on those minutiae which are of no importance unless so far as people choose to make them so. We will quote a few instances.

His diocese was full of those *stations* which serve to retrace before the eyes of the faithful the different pauses which our Saviour may be supposed to have made in his painful walk up to mount Calvary. Each of them was marked by an image, at the foot of which the devotees stopped to kneel down and pray. One of the bishop's first steps was to reduce those stations to half their former number : upon which the people exclaimed against him as guilty of heresy. He wished to abolish the worship of images : immediately he was branded as a Calvinist, a heretic, an atheist. In Tuscany, as in every other catholic country, the priests, in celebrating mass, pronounced certain words in a low voice : he maintained that the divine service was intended as much for the congregation as for the priest, and that nothing ought to be concealed from them ; he therefore gravely ordained that the clergymen should pronounce in a loud voice all the prayers of the mass. With the approbation of the Holy See, which was easily obtained for such institutions, there had been established in Tuscany a new system of devotion directed to "*the sacred heart of Jesus.*" The zeal of the Bishop of Pistoja was inflamed against an establishment which he thought incompatible with sound theology : he wrote a pastoral letter to forbid it, and, setting himself up as a censor of the Holy See, asserted that the pope had suffered

suffered himself to be deceived. This happened in 1781, a short while before Pius's journey to Vienna.

Pius, alarmed by these various attempts against his authority, directed a brief to the bishop to recall him to his duty. Misled in turn by his zeal, he used expressions in it which the grand-duke considered as very offensive ; and war was declared. In a very energetic memorial which his Minister at Rome was obliged to present to the pope, he demanded of him a *speedy and signal* reparation.—“ The times of Gregory VII. and Boniface VIII.” said the grand-duke, “ are no more. Sovereigns will no longer permit the pope to break through the respect which is due to them, or arrogate to himself the right of commanding their subjects.” Leopold ordered his minister to depart immediately unless he obtained satisfaction.

In times less fraught with tempests for the Holy See, Pius's letter would have been deemed moderate. But Leopold was on the watch for a pretext: his philosophy had grown into a kind of passion, and the passions are irascible, and cannot brook delay. Yet what was the immediate cause of this great rupture? A pitiful adventure which ought never to have transpired beyond the gates of the cloisters. There were at Prato some Dominican friars who acted as confessors to a convent of Dominican nuns in their vicinity. This spiritual relation had here, as in many other cases, given to the stronger sex a great ascendancy over the weaker ; and irregularities of more than one kind had been the consequence. Suddenly the hypocritical bishop of Pistoja was inflamed with faintly wrath : he asserted that the Dominican nuns of Prato had been corrupted “ in doctrine and morals” by the friars their confessors: and, instead of denouncing that disorder to the pope according to the hitherto established rule, he loudly declaimed against their scandalous conduct, and addressed his complaint to the grand-duke. Leopold seized this opportunity to insist that the Dominican nuns should no longer remain under the guidance of their seducers, and that all nunneries in general should be in immediate subjection to the bishops. Pius thought it a duty he owed to the dignity of the Holy See to reprimand the bishop

bishop of Pistoja for having eluded his interposition. Hence the grand-duke's resentment.

The pope, terrified by his menaces, did not himself venture to pronounce on a question which appeared to him of high importance. He consulted an assembly of cardinals: these took the opinion of the heads of religious orders; and they, apprehensive of greater storms, acquiesced in the will of the grand-duke.

This was the epoch of the most serious quarrels between the emperor and the pope. The whole Sacred College, not excepting even the prudent Bernis, were alarmed at this combination of persecutions ready to fall at once on the Holy See: for the pontiff was at the same moment engaged in a struggle with Russia for the archbishopric of Mohilow, and contending also with Naples and with Venice, as we shall see in the sequel. Cardinal Bernis, forgetting his mild and amiable philosophy, took part with his brethren, predicted the greatest misfortunes to the Holy See, and sighing taxed the imprudence of sovereigns. All mankind are alike when their interest is at stake. On this occasion, the pope was perhaps the most moderate of all those who suffered by these encroachments of the temporal power. Already the cardinals branded his silence with the name of cowardice; and it was in great measure by their instigation that he was impelled to write to the bishop of Pistoja in that resolute tone which gave such offence to the grand-duke.

Cardinal Corsini, however entered into some explanations with the Tuscan minister at Rome, which effected an accommodation; and the storm was for a time appeased. But the first steps had been taken: the grand-duke deliberately meditated on his plan of reform, and continued carrying it into execution. The pope was soon convinced that resistance on his part would only make the evil worse, and entered into a compromise on every point which did not appear to him of primary importance. In the course of the year 1782, for instance, he consented to the suppression of seventeen convents in the territory of Sienna. But he speedily repented of those forced acts of condescension, when, in the same year, Leopold, closely treading in his brother's steps, and not even awaiting the result of Pius's journey to Vienna, enjoined all bi-  
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shops and ecclesiastical superiors to draw out a statement of the different sums of money annually sent from his states to Rome on whatsoever account—to suspend such remittances—and to keep those sums ready at his disposal ; and when, after a few months more, he entirely suppressed all contributions of that nature, and, diverting their produce from its *sacred* destination, had the boldness to command that all sums already collected under these different pretences should be distributed among the poor of each parish. He afterwards, without the approbation of the pope, abolished forty useless convents.

He proceeded even farther, if possible ; and the pope's pride was particularly hurt by his next step. Pius was scarcely returned from Vienna, and still enjoyed all the illusion of the success of his apostolic journey, when the grand-duke, without alleging any pretext, without any other motive than his own convenience, suddenly sequestrated the rich revenues of an abbey which the pope himself, with Leopold's consent, had conferred on cardinal Salviati. Pius fancied he saw a striking difference between the two brothers : he was not yet undeceived with respect to Joseph's disposition. But how great was the consternation of the zealous supporters of orthodoxy, when they learned that Leopold had abolished the inquisition in his states, and this “ *by his supreme authority,*” and of his “ *certain knowledge,*”—consecrated forms of expression, which the pope thought himself alone entitled to use in ecclesiastical matters ! That tribunal, more moderate at Rome than in any other part of Europe, was so organised, composed, and kept within bounds, that it was the faithful ally of the papal power without ever becoming its rival. There seemed to exist no inquisition at Rome except for form's sake, and, as it were, to serve as a model to other catholic countries. The abolition of the Holy Office was therefore not in its own nature an unpardonable crime in the eyes of the pope ; but, that a secular prince should dare to decree it without the intervention of the Holy See ! such an act was, in the opinion of the canonists, an infringement of the rights of the church, which was not to be tolerated. Finally, during the same year the grand-duke, still by virtue of that power which was said to be a usurpation of the rights of the Holy See, declared

declared that all monasteries should be subject to the bishops ; that the latter should alone and without concurrence nominate to the vacant livings in their dioceses, should confer prebends, and, in a word, perform of themselves every thing which the See of Rome had assumed the right of doing for them. The *datario* was to retain only the profits arising from the nominations to the bishoprics of Tuscany.

Political quarrels seemed for a while to mingle with those of a religious nature. At a time when the ecclesiastical state was threatened with a scarcity, the legate of Ravenna had prohibited the exportation of corn from the territory under his jurisdiction. Some Tuscans, who lived by that commerce, having attempted to continue it, were apprehended. The grand-duke assumed a menacing tone: they were released, and he demanded no further reparation. It was for a moment thought that he entertained a more favourable disposition toward the court of Rome. He bore no antipathy to Pius, as a temporal prince ; he only was determined to strip him of all his spiritual usurpations, to restore religion to its primitive purity within his own states, and no longer suffer his subjects to grovel in superstition, ignorance, and slavery, which retarded their regeneration.

But the bishop of Pistoja was preparing new perplexities for the court of Rome. He had gained an ascendancy over the mind of the grand-duke by flattering his passion for innovation : and he made a beginning in his own diocese with a degree of warmth approaching to extravagance. The attack he had made in 1781 on the ridiculous confraternity of “ the heart of Jesus ” had excited numerous enemies against him. He was publicly reviled as a Janсениst, a very serious reproach from the mouths of Italian divines ; and he would have been still more grievously abused if people had been better acquainted with his thoughts.

Exasperated by contradiction, he no longer observed any bounds. Thus the world had seen the monk Luther begin by preaching against indulgences, and conclude by wresting from the Court of Rome one half of her empire. — During Passion-week in the year 1786 he introduced the use of the vulgar tongue in the celebration of divine service.

service. Soon after, by a pastoral letter he announced the convocation of a diocesan synod, to which he invited all the bishops, deans, and parish-priests of Tuscany. Of two hundred and twenty ecclesiastics who attended that assembly, all except five adopted not only his innovations in the liturgy and in discipline, but also his opinions respecting faith, grace, the authority of the church, and predestination—opinions which, according to the decision of the Holy See, were heterodox. This was going beyond the intentions of the grand-duke, who was frequently heard to say, “I mean to reform discipline, but I do not wish to meddle with doctrinal points.” However, as he less dreaded the excess than the want of zeal in those matters, he overlooked the bishop’s deviations from the prescribed line of conduct. But the court of Rome, as may well be imagined, was much less patient. Already, at the instigation of the fanatics by whom he was surrounded, Pius had prepared against the seditious prelate a bull of excommunication: but reflection, the fear of irritating the disease by that violent remedy, and the hope that the court of Spain would interpose in favour of the papacy, withheld his hand which was ready to hurl the thunderbolt.

In the following year the bishop of Pistoja repaired to Pisa to wait on the grand-duke, and enjoy his triumph.—The populace, every where and ever the same, had loudly murmured against his innovations: though they forgave his opinions respecting grace, they could not forgive his diminution of the number of images: but when they saw him honoured by the notice of their Sovereign, they lavished on him their acclamations. Already Ricci, and another Tuscan prelate, the bishop of Colle, encouraged by these first successes, had announced synods, each in his own diocese. Leopold now thought it was time that he should secure to himself the honour of the reformation, and sanction it in such manner as should screen him from the accusation of usurping the spiritual power. He proclaimed a general synod, whose object, he said in his circular letter, was to prevent the divisions which might result from these local synods, and to establish throughout entire Tuscany a perfect uniformity in ecclesiastical matters. Eighteen archbishops or bishops met in consequence  
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in the Pitti palace. But here an opposition began to appear, which afflicted Leopold who only sought the good of his country, and which excited the indignation of Ricci, whose sole aim was the gratification of his ambition and vanity, but who now saw his reign at an end.—The three archbishops of Florence, Pisa, and Sienna, with ten bishops, refused to adopt the reforms proposed by the grand-duke. The populace, swayed by such authoritative example, forgot their late enthusiasm in favour of Ricci, and soon passed to the opposite extreme. Recollecting that he had, five years before, caused I know not what relique to be removed from the church of Prato, they crowd in tumultuous disorder to the house of his grand-vicar—forcibly take from him the relique—carry it in triumph to the church—cause a mass in honour of it to be celebrated according to the Roman ritual—run to pillage the bishop's palace—burn the archives—vent their fury on the books which are pointed out to them as herodox—cast them into the flames together with different articles of furniture and the prelate's picture, singing hymns in honour of the Virgin, which were occasionally interrupted by the cry of “It is thus that heretics must be treated!”

The grand-duke thought it his duty to repress these disorders excited by Ricci's enemies. They had been openly heard to observe at his synod that it was “an assembly without a head:” to which it was answered, “the grand-duke has a head capable of supplying the place of that of the pope.” Leopold determined to convince Ricci and his adherents that they had not been mistaken in relying on his support. He caused the authors of the tumult to be apprehended. Ricci, whether through generosity or hypocrisy, made intercession in their favour. “I must declare,” said he, “that, in the heat of that popular ferment, not a single word was uttered against the sovereign. It is I, it is I alone, whom their instigators wish to render odious to these good people, whose simplicity is easily led astray. I am the stumbling-block: it is through hatred of me that attempts are made to defeat the wise intentions of the grand-duke.” Leopold wished at least to indemnify him for the losses he had suffered by this persecution, and accordingly created him superintendent

tendent of the property of the suppressed monasteries, with a salary of three thousand crowns. Ricci, to prove the disinterestedness of his zeal, accepted the office, but declined the salary. Such marks of good will, however, confirmed him in his plan of reform. From Pisa, where he was retained by the grand-duke, he circulated pastoral letters by which he ordained that promises of marriage should be regarded by the tribunals as of no effect—abolished the use of oaths—diminished the number of festivals, &c.

Leopold meanwhile laboured to bring over the dissenting bishops to the principles of the three reforming prelates. He was successful with only a few of their number: all the others obstinately persevered in their refusal; and Leopold had in contemplation some serious measures to conquer their opposition.

On the other hand, the resentment of the court of Rome was at least equal to her chagrin; and fear alone compelled her to observe moderation in expressing it. Pius, acquiescing in the grand-duke's demand, consented that Pontremoli should be erected into a bishopric. But, Leopold having proposed to him four candidates, the pope had the courage to prefer the last. Leopold asserted that the pontiff's choice ought to have fallen on the first, as being the man for whom he felt the greatest interest. Pius obstinately refused to comply, under pretence that the first of the candidates was an outrageous Jansenist, wholly devoted to the bishop of Pistoja. This was inviting a new tempest which might become serious. The Tuscan minister wrote in plain terms to the nuncio that he must choose the candidate who had the grand-duke's approbation, or state the reasons why he was rejected, and thereby afford him an opportunity of justifying himself;—that his royal highness would not recede from his right of presentation;—that, if it were contested, he would consider such proceeding as a continuation of the offensive personalities, of the hostilities, which he had for some time constantly experienced from the court of Rome;—that, in support of the rights of his sovereignty, he would, if necessary, come to a formal rupture, and recall his minister.

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This language did not intimidate the court of Rome : it sent to the nuncio at Florence very energetic instructions, and even an order to withdraw if the court of Tuscany renewed its menaces. This firmness was not attended with such consequences as might have been expected. Leopold was naturally of a pacific disposition : he dreaded insurrections, and the dangers of a schism. It appears even that the emperor advised him to yield. This was the epoch when the pretensions of the nuncios made some noise in Germany. Joseph in a fit of resentment intended to abolish the office of nuncio : but thinking it necessary first to take the opinion of the Aulic Council, he was informed by them in answer that the nuncios were authorised in Germany by the constitutional laws, in every thing concerning religion and the canons : whereupon he renounced his project. Leopold did not choose to show himself more daring than his brother, but, softening his resentment for the moment, assured the pope that it never had been his intention to say any thing that could imply disrespect to his holiness ; that his resentment was solely levelled against certain mischief-makers who sowed dissension between the two courts ; that he would cause the question which divided them to be investigated in an amicable manner ; that he was far from wishing to come to a rupture, &c.

The court of Rome, which had not for some years been accustomed to similar successes, was dazzled by the splendor of its present triumph. But the truce was not of long duration : for soon after, the pope having prohibited all the books which had appeared at Florence, Prato, and Pistoja, concerning ecclesiastic affairs—Leopold, on the other hand, forbade the reading of the fanatical libels which the court of Rome had caused to be printed against his reforms—books which fostered the spirit of superstition among his people, and had excited them to revolt. The pontiff had the courage to maintain the contest ; and opposing reprisals to reprisals, prohibited the introduction of the Florence gazette in which the court of Rome was frequently abused ;—and, what was yet more serious, he forbade the importation of Tuscan wines into the ecclesiastical state.

The animosity of the court of Rome pursued Leopold even

even beyond the bounds of Italy. The pontiff had intrigues set on foot in Germany to prevent the grand-duke's election as king of the Romans, at a time when the declining health of Joseph II. evinced the necessity of choosing a person to succeed him. Prompted by so many causes of complaint, Leopold did not feel himself bound to observe any measure. Recalling his minister from Rome, he reverted to his original idea, and, by an edict of the twentieth of September 1788, entirely abolished the office of nuncio in his dominions, ordaining that for the time to come the nuncio should no longer possess any privileges except those which were enjoyed by the representatives of purely temporal sovereigns. Soon after, he forbade, on pain of banishment, all members of religious orders in the grand-duchy to maintain any relation with foreign superiors; declaring them to be subject to the bishops alone in spiritual concerns, and to the lay tribunals in those of a temporal nature. He commanded that there should in future be no appeals to the Holy See; that ecclesiastical causes should in the first instance be brought before the bishop, and definitively decided by the metropolitan, according to the ancient hierarchical order established in the church. This edict reduced to nothing the pretended primacy of the sovereign pontiff.

The alarm at Rome was very lively. The pope immediately appointed a congregation of those cardinals in whom he placed the greatest reliance—Borromeo, a sensible intelligent man, of a very singular turn of mind, but incapable of any over-violent measures against sovereigns;—Palotta, who, under an exterior roughness of manner, concealed a fund of very sound sense accompanied by great probity, and who had in general conducted himself very judiciously toward the temporal powers;—Negroni, who was the most agreeable to them of all the cardinals;—Zelada, whom they esteemed for his gentle manners, his knowledge, and his conciliating disposition;—Buoncompagni, at that time secretary of state, and the most enlightened member of the Sacred College, connected moreover, at least by interest, with the principal catholic courts. This congregation had for their secretary the prelate Campanelli, the pope's auditor. The selection of such men to compose it did not announce an intention of carrying matters to extremity. But Leopold was highly irritated,

irritated, and, instead of listening to terms of conciliation, demanded the surrender of the nuncio's papers. On this occasion the pope displayed an instance of vigour tempered by prudence. If he had always acted in the same manner, he would have avoided many misfortunes. Although he thought the grand-duke's demand very extraordinary, cardinal Buoncompagni made answer in his name to the Tuscan minister, that he "would prefer suffering any violation whatever, rather than stoop to such meanness," the papers of a foreign minister being even more sacred than his person;—that, nevertheless, through a love of peace, he would communicate all such of the nuncio's papers as solely related to matters of conscience. To this declaration, which was more energetic than could reasonably have been expected, the secretary of state joined a protest against the infringements made on ecclesiastic discipline by the late edict of the grand-duke. At Florence the animosity against the pope was too violent to admit of this protest producing the smallest effect: the courier who had brought it returned without an answer. All the opponents of the papacy, with the bishop of Pistoja at their head, saw their victory certain, and thought themselves no longer bound to a delicate observance of moderation. Ricci printed the acts of his synod: soon after, the grand-duke also published those of the provincial synod which he had convoked at Florence in the preceding year, adding to them an apology for the conduct of the bishops, and a refutation of the pretensions of the court of Rome.

That court passed the entire year 1789 in the midst of storms: and while the national assembly of France was preparing for it much more violent tempests, the court of Florence, not yet foreseeing the consequences of which the latter would be productive to all sovereigns, continued to pursue its plan of philosophic persecution. The bishop of Pistoja did not display modesty in the enjoyment of his triumph. While the congregation, appointed to examine his works, was preparing to deliver them to the inquisition and cause them to be burned by the hands of the common hangman, Ricci, depending on the support of the grand-duke in whose court he acted the part of

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prime-minister, testified the most insulting contempt for the Holy See, ridiculed its thunders, its pretensions, and its partisans. In announcing to cardinal Salviati that Leopold withheld from him the revenues of a rich abbey which he possessed in Tuscany, he affected to be ignorant of his rank, and addressed his letter to "the priest Salviati." Leopold, on his part, not content with recommending in a circular letter to all the Tuscan bishops to conform to the principles of the synod of Pistoja, advanced temporal pretensions at the expence of the papacy, and claimed the duchy of Urbino, as usurped by the popes from his predecessors.

But the period of the tribulations which Pius had been doomed to suffer from the grand-duke, was now arrived. An unexpected incident opportunely happened, which saved him from the impending crisis. The days of Joseph II. were numbered: he died on the 22d of February 1790; and Leopold was called to the imperial throne. The reforms which had been introduced in church affairs were now deprived of their principal support. Scarcely had he quitted Tuscany, when superstition regained there a part of the ground she had lost. The provisional regency, established by Leopold under the guidance of Gianni as president, adopted injudicious measures, of which the result was a dearth and popular commotions. The clergy, long kept in subjection, again reared their heads, and for a time resumed their former sway. The regency thought themselves very happy in being allowed to come to terms with them, and left the arch-bishops of Florence, Pisa, and Sienna, at full liberty to re-establish every thing that had been destroyed. In an instant were seen to revive from their ashes the confraternities, the processions, the altars that had been overthrown, the ancient liturgy, and all the religious mummeries.

But an act of weakness was never found an effectual mean of appeasing discontent. The confraternities, the hermitages, the reliques, did not procure for the people those supplies of wine and oil of which they stood in need. Some private storehouses were plundered; and the president Gianni could no otherwise save himself from the violence of the infuriate populace than by escaping through

through a window. Inebriated with fanaticism, the people of Tuscany were on the point of launching into the same excesses as the French nation committed in the intoxication of their liberty. Their fury however subsided when they no longer had before their eyes the principal object of their hatred: and the court of Rome obtained at least a slight consolation amid the evils by which it was threatened, and which itself had provoked. But its triumph was neither complete nor durable. Every thing of an essential nature in Leopold's establishments survived his removal. After the insurrection of the populace, the bishop of Pistoja retired to Chianti, where he continued to exercise his fantastic functions: thence he issued, in favour of all who applied to him, those dispensations for which until then application had always been made to Rome; and, persevering with puerile obstinacy in the prosecution of his plans, he succeeded in substituting a breviary \* of his own invention in lieu of that used in the Roman church. Wise Leopold! were these the victories which you pointed out to his zeal?

But the new grand-duke, less ardent than his father, and having, in common with other sovereigns, his reasons for dreading reforms, far from encouraging the bishop of Pistoja, prevailed on him to resign his see. The intelligence of this event was grateful to the court of Rome: nor was Leopold tardy to announce it in an affectionate letter to Pius, to which he thought that slight atonement justly due.

## CHAP.

\* A book of prayers used by the Romish clergy, and containing all the different services except the mass.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Disputes between PIUS and the Court of Naples.*

THE courts of Vienna and Florence were not the only ones that harassed Pius during the fifteen years immediately antecedent to the French revolution. That of Naples had from an earlier period been engaged with the Roman See in disputes of a more serious nature, and of which the consequences were still more disagreeable to the pontiff.

The Neapolitan government, however, did not entertain any personal antipathy to Pius, although it had taken some steps to oppose his elevation to the pontificate. But it was at this time swayed by the marquis Tanucci, who, with all his native warmth and pertinacity, subverted the animosity of the house of Bourbon against the Jesuits,—who had framed for himself a certain system of philosophy strongly inimical to the usurpations of the court of Rome,—and who, above all things, viewed with indignation the kind of vassalage to which the crown of Naples was reduced with respect to the papacy.

These different causes of discord excited the clouds of misunderstanding between the two courts within a few months after Pius had assumed the tiara.

Don Carlos, who afterward mounted the throne of Spain under the name of Charles the Third, had, on his accession to the crown of Naples in 1735, found the Neapolitan clergy in possession of considerable influence, and of four fifths of the entire revenue of the kingdom. Though religiously disposed, he entertained sufficiently precise ideas respecting the temporal authority, and perseveringly laboured to confine the spiritual power within

its proper bounds. He had heard mention made of a professor of law in the university of Pisa, by name Tanucci, who had acquired great fame by his theologic erudition and the firmness of his principles. He invited him to court, and soon gave him his entire confidence. During the reign of Don Carlos, however, Tanucci had done nothing more than pave the way for the great reforms in ecclesiastic affairs. But, having been nominated president of the regency which Charles, at the time of his departure for Spain, had appointed for the minority of his son (Ferdinand the Fourth) whom he left on the throne of Naples, Tanucci, now released from every restraint, gave the rein to the impetuosity of his character, and seriously bent his thoughts on despoiling the Holy See of its usurpations.

The duchy of Benevento was sequestrated in 1768. In the following year Tanucci made a considerable diminution in the fees accruing to the Roman chancellery : he prohibited the monasteries from making new acquisitions of property : he stripped the nuncio of several of his pretended privileges. It was customary to send annual contributions from Naples for the works of Saint Peter's church and for the Vatican Library : these were suppressed. Tanucci even disputed the pope's right to confer benefices within the dominions of the Neapolitan monarch. In 1772 he revived the pretensions of young Ferdinand, as heir of the house of Farnese, to the duchies of Castro and Ronciglione. The displeasure which the court of Rome had given to the house of Bourbon by its conduct toward the Duke of Parma, furnished a plausible pretext for these acts both of temporal and spiritual hostility. But the hour of reconciliation arrived : the duchy of Benevento was restored : the presentation of the *palFREY\**, which had been suspended, was again put in practice. But the changes which had been effected in ecclesiastic discipline still subsisted : and when the bull for the suppression of the Jesuits—that bull so earnestly solicited and so long expected—was at length published in the states of his Neapolitan majesty, it was with the following

\* See page 23.

ing clause—"without prejudice to the rights of the royal sovereignty and jurisdiction."

Pius the Sixth, on his accession to the pontifical chair, endeavoured to cajole the court of Naples: but he soon found that his efforts were ineffectual. Cardinal Orfini, the Neapolitan minister at Rome, who had made fruitless exertions to prevent Pius's election, now resigned his ministerial functions, after having represented the new pontiff to his court as a zealous partisan of the Jesuits.

Tanucci did not need this additional incentive to the prosecution of his plan. He maintained that to the king alone belonged the right of nominating to the bishoprics and abbeys which were of royal advowson, that the pope could, at most, appoint only to those of a different description, and that, even then he was bound to confer them on persons approved by the king. He confined within narrower limits the jurisdiction of the nunciature, and even took a pleasure in thwarting the pope on subjects of trifling importance. Among the variety of absurd customs introduced by the Holy See, was that of granting a four years' indulgence to all who, during the jubilee should visit four of the principal churches at Rome. A royal edict was issued, which declared, that, to obtain those spiritual favours, it was sufficient to perform that pious formality in four churches at Naples. In this instance the sovereign showed himself even more ridiculous than the pontiff: if he believed in the efficacy of indulgences, he could not, destitute as he was of spiritual power, think himself authorized to determine the mode of obtaining them: he therefore in his turn was guilty of usurpation; but there are countries where philosophy is obliged to compromise with superstition.

Tanucci adopted measures of greater utility: he suddenly suppressed seventy-eight monasteries in Sicily; he consolidated some bishoprics into one, caused abbeys to be conferred by the sole authority of the king, and directed the bishops to fill by their own nomination the vacant livings in their dioceses. It was no longer possible to foresee where the court of Naples would stop: even by that of Spain it was considered as overstepping the bounds of prudence. The Spanish minister Monino was instructed

to interpose : but cardinal Orsini confirmed Tanucci in his obstinate perseverance.

At this period the archbishopric of Naples became vacant, and proved the source of a new contest between Pius and Ferdinand. The king claimed the right of nominating to it according to his own pleasure ; and the pontiff maintained that the nomination could not take effect without his concurrence. Cardinal Giraud, who had materially contributed to the elevation of Pius to the pontificate, and retained a certain ascendancy over him, acted as mediator in bringing this difference to an amicable termination, and without the intervention of Tanucci or Orsini. It was agreed that the king alone should nominate to the archbishopric of Naples, and that, in return the see of Palermo, which was also vacant at the same time, should be conferred by the pope without the concurrence of Ferdinand.

But when the ground of quarrels is of ancient date, and they are connected with personalities, whatever truces may temporarily suspend them are not of long duration. Tanucci and Orsini on the one hand, on the other the pope's secretary of state and the Rezzonicos, mortified at Giraud's success, sought and soon found an opportunity of breaking that which had been concluded on this occasion. A persuasion was excited in the mind of the pope that the new archbishop of Naples was tainted with Jansenism. To incur such an accusation, it was sufficient that a man were known to be not a friend to the Jesuits. From a period of above three centuries back, the archbishop of Naples had by invariable usage been decorated with the Roman purple. Ferdinand asked that customary favour for his creature : Pius refused it ; and hostilities blazed forth anew. This event exactly co-incided with the wishes of Tanucci, whose bustling disposition instigated him to seek for broils with even greater eagerness than his philosophy led him to pursue plans of reform. He was moreover stung with jealous mortification on observing that the new Spanish minister, the duke de Grimaldi, lived on terms of closest intimacy with his cousin-german Pallavicini, the secretary of state. He was apprehensive of a secret understanding between them for the purpose of inducing Charles the Third to recom-

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mend to his son a more moderate conduct toward the court of Rome. The usual effect of opposition on his temper was to irritate him, but never to make him recede from his purpose. Accordingly he sent information to the pope, that a persistence in his refusal should be followed by retaliation on the part of the Neapolitan government; that the archbishops of Naples should never again be permitted to accept a seat in the Sacred College; that they could readily dispense with Roman decorations; that the king would create an ecclesiastic order of which the members should be clothed in purple after the manner of the cardinals; that, after all, the cardinalian dignity was nothing more than a *superfétation* in the hierarchy, &c.

Pius felt some alarm, and had recourse to paternal remonstrances, the mode in which he usually concluded. His nuncio was instructed to represent mildly to the king that his holiness felt a conscientious repugnance to the exaltation of a Jansenist to the cardinalate. But he experienced an unyielding inflexibility in the Neapolitan court, where Tanucci still maintained his sway. In all his measures, even those of the most prudent cast, a love of mischief bore some share. He studied to procure a triumph for that chimerical Jansenism which excited such uneasy scruples in the bosom of the holy father. The new archbishop of Naples was obliged to erase from the pastoral letter by which he announced his nomination the customary words "*et apostolicæ sedis gratiâ \**," which would have implied that he was indebted for it to the see of Rome.

About this time a Dominican friar, a professor of theology, wrote a book which the Roman inquisition prohibited under the pretence that it was tainted with Jansenism. The author was degraded from his professorial chair by cardinal Boxadors the general of his order, and summoned to appear before him. He obeyed: but scarcely had he reached Rome, when the king—or, to speak more properly, Tanucci—ordered him to return to Naples, to resume his chair, and to write a continuation of his work. The docile Dominican paid equal obedience to

\* "And through the favour of the apostolic see."

to this new mandate ; and the mortification of the court of Rome was extreme.

Every circumstance now seemed to co-operate in exasperating the quarrel between the papacy and the Neapolitan government. The former had peaceably enough recovered the privilege of annually receiving from the latter a homage which was still more flattering to the vanity of the pontiff than those purely ecclesiastic prerogatives which were successively rested from his grasp : I mean the presentation of the palfrey.

It is well known that Charles of Anjou, who was in great measure indebted to the protection of the pope for the acquisition of the throne of Naples, wishing at once to exhibit a proof of his gratitude and to sanction his usurpation by the stamp of legitimacy, subjected his newly-acquired kingdom to the annual payment of forty-thousand florins to the see of Rome, and surpassing in obsequiousness his predecessors of the Norman line, declared himself a vassal of the sovereign pontiff, binding himself to present to him every year a white palfrey, and entailing on all his successors the performance of that degrading act of homage.

At the period of these transactions the popes stood towering in the zenith of that power which at length gave scandal to all Europe whom they had so long kept in thralldom. It may well be supposed that their arrogance took due advantage of so striking an instance of submission. The servile devotion of the temporal sovereigns even outran the pretensions of the Roman see. Those of Naples had prided themselves in a display of munificence as a palliative of their degradation : nor had the popes neglected to claim these homages as matter of right, and to consider the most trifling minutiae of them as an essential part of their dignity. When that was at stake, every thing, even the most ridiculous custom, was accounted sacred ; and the guilt of *sacrilege*, as it were, attached to the man who should dare in the slightest degree to infringe it. But neither the name nor the deed carried any terror to the soul of Tanucci. He only awaited a convenient pretext to emancipate the crown of Naples from the tributary subjection in which he had found it sunk. The following was the mode of tendering that tribute,  
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which had in the first instance been stipulated in a very vague manner by its vile and criminal author.

Every year, on the eve of the festival of the apostles Peter and Paul, at the conclusion of vespers, a kind of throne was erected for the pope in the area before St. Peter's church. A white palfrey was led to him, richly caparisoned, and shod with silver. On the left side of the saddle hung a purse containing six thousand ducats, or a bill to the same amount, payable at sight. Prince Colonna, the grand-constable of the kingdom of Naples, had the charge of presenting the palfrey, which for that purpose was conducted to the foot of his holiness's throne: prince Colonna then gave the animal a stroke with a rod on the fore-legs; whereupon the docile creature, having been long trained to the performance of this respectful feat, prostrated himself, and again rose. His mission now fulfilled, his illustrious interpreter took the gold or the paper, presented it to the pope, and thus closed the ceremony. The court of Rome was careful to enhance the pomp of the scene by the most magnificent apparatus: and could it do less to honour that remnant of the sovereign supremacy which it once had arrogated to itself over all Christendom?

The pontiffs, however, had not uninterruptedly enjoyed the proud gratification of this tribute. During the continuance of their grand contest with the courts of the house of Bourbon, the presentation of the palfrey had been suspended: after the reconciliation, the practice was resumed: but even in the second year, in 1776, the performance itself was productive of a scene which might have been followed by its abolition. A dispute of etiquette arose between the pages of Cornaro the governor of Rome and those of prince Colonna, which had nearly interrupted the *august* ceremony. It was asserted at the time that the quarrel had been privately excited by cardinal Pallavicini who was suspected of acting in collusion with the mischievous Tanucci. Such a manœuvre was by no means probable: yet Pius was so far satisfied of its probability that he conceived a yet stronger antipathy to his secretary of state, whom he had never loved, and in whom he always viewed the man who had been his most formidable competitor. However the question  
may

may be decided respecting the charge against Pallavicini, Tanucci took occasion, from the scene which had occurred, to propose the adoption of a much less pompous mode of presenting the palfrey and the money. But, for one of his successors was reserved the task of accomplishing something further. Tanucci, bowed down with the weight of years, soon after retired from the ministry; an event which proved a source of great joy to the court of Rome. The pope however had the prudence to refrain from testifying the pleasure which he felt on the occasion: and it was well that he observed that caution; for Tanucci had relinquished only the title of prime minister, and for some time longer continued to enjoy all the power annexed to the station.

But, before he retired from office, he prevailed on the king to adopt the measure of which the pontiff was apprehensive. The Neapolitan minister was directed to announce to the pope, that, for the purpose of avoiding all future disputes on the subject of etiquette, the palfrey and the six thousand ducats should thenceforward be presented, not by the grand-constable Colonna invested with the character of ambassador extraordinary, but by a simple agent.

We have often seen with what fond affection Pius cherished the pomp of ceremonial. The Neapolitan declaration therefore wounded him in a very tender part; and in his affliction he turned for relief to the Spanish Minister, knowing that Charles the Third, when he had not any subject of quarrel with him, sympathised in his distresses, and that he retained considerable influence over the young king his son, and over Tanucci. His complaints did not meet with a reception correspondent to his hopes. The court of Madrid was not yet certain of his intentions with respect to the Jesuits, and accused him of having given testimonies of his condescension to their partisans. The Spanish Minister Florida-Blanca did not conceal from cardinal Pallavicini that he had himself little reliance on the efficacy of his intercession. That minister, naturally of an imperious temper, was extremely impatient of the slightest attack upon what he justly considered as his own work.

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Within a very short time after, he was recalled home to occupy the station of Prime Minister of Spain, and was succeeded in his foreign mission by the Duke de Grimaldi. Pius, although he felt an esteem for Florida-Blanca, was nevertheless rejoiced to see himself relieved from the presence of that austere censor. The secretary of state especially was delighted to learn that the post of Spanish Minister at Rome was to be filled by his near relative whom he called his protector, and with whose easy disposition he was acquainted. But the pope and his minister were not benefited by the change. The count de Florida-Blanca entered on his ministry with a thorough knowledge of the court of Rome, of its prejudices, of its ridiculous pretensions, and its contests with the Neapolitan court. Till that time he had acted in rigid conformity to rigid instructions: thenceforward it was by himself that the instructions were to be given. As to the duke de Grimaldi, it was soon perceived at Madrid that he suffered himself to be deceived by the Jesuitical party: and the confidence of the court was reposed in the chevalier Azara, who, at first under the simple title of agent, and after a few years under that of minister, acquired at Rome the ascendancy to which his knowledge and energetic character justly entitled him.

The count de Florida-Blanca—who, previous to his departure from Rome, had been a witness of the profane chagrin excited in the pope's bosom by the threats of the Neapolitan court respecting the palfrey, and had observed him to sigh at the idea that it would perhaps be under his pontificate that the Holy See should be deprived of that *glorious* homage—condescended to exert all his influence for the purpose of saving him from that mortification.—His efforts were successful, and the famous ceremony was performed in 1777 with the accustomed pomp. The pope testified a puerile joy on the occasion; and the people of Rome celebrated with enthusiasm what they considered as a kind of victory. That victory however was not in all points complete: and it was easy to perceive that the court of Naples reluctantly yielded to a foreign impulse. The constable Colonna, in presenting the tribute from the Neapolitan monarch, added, to the solemn

solemn expressions consecrated by long custom, these words of sinister omen, "for the present year," and said that "the presentation of the palfrey was only a testimony of devotion toward Saint Peter and Saint Paul." Hereupon the pope, though taken unaware, immediately replied, "We accept the palfrey as a feudal offering due from the crown of Naples;" and the attending crowd applauded this reply by repeated cries of "*viva! viva!*" Such are the important objects with which sovereigns often feed their vanity!—On both sides some dissatisfaction prevailed. At Naples the grandees murmured, and complained that the advantage so courageously gained by Tanucci was safely relinquished by his successor.

That successor, the marquis della Sambucca, did not however spare the feelings of the court of Rome in other respects: he pursued Tanucci's plan, or rather the spirit of Tanucci continued to animate and guide the Neapolitan government. In the same year all the bishops in the kingdom were forbidden to receive bulls from Rome under any pretence whatever. Notwithstanding the constitutional independence which Sicily was entitled to enjoy with respect to the See of Rome, the popes, ever dextrous in taking advantage of any negligence in the secular governments, had succeeded in causing their bulls to be accepted by the bishops of that island, and even obtaining the royal *exsequatur*. This abuse was proscribed. The vigilance of old Tanucci would not suffer even in the marquis della Sambucca the slightest derogation from the treaties which bound the court of Rome. That new minister wished to tolerate in the kingdom of Naples two ex-Jesuits, his relatives. Tanucci secretly complained of the circumstance of the court of Madrid; and immediately Charles III. who still continued to exercise his paternal authority at Naples, very seriously recommended to the king his son not to suffer that exception from the general law which banished the defunct society from his dominions. At this period his recommendations still possessed over the king of Naples all the influence of commands. Sambucca's two *protégés* were sent after their brethren into the papal territory. Thus an absent and foreign monarch gave the law

law at Naples through the organ of a minister who had ceased from his functions : and this singular phenomenon suggested to a traveller who was at that time passing through the Neapolitan dominions, that “ the kingdom of Naples resembled the Empire of the shades.”

The interposition of Charles, however, for some time saved the pontiff from new mortifications, and effected a temporary suspension of his disputes with the Neapolitan court. On each side some slight testimonies of condescension were given. The king deigned to ask the pope's consent to the suppression of a rich Carthusian monastery ; and the pope deigned to acquiesce, but on condition that, in taking possession of the property belonging to it, he should make provision for the support of its monkish inmates. The presentation of the palfrey took place in 1778, but with the same mortifying restrictions as in the preceding year. The king had still an existing cause of complaint against the Holy See : the pontiff persevered in his refusal to grant the Roman purple to the archbishop of Naples. Ferdinand lost his patience, and suddenly put a stop to the dispensations which the *datario* still continued to grant. By this measure the pope saw one branch of his revenue cut off : yet he checked the emotions of his resentment, and hoped that time would operate much in his favour : but time was his most cruel enemy ; it was employed in maturing the plans of those new hostilities which his opponents were preparing for him, and which the pontiff himself ceased not to provoke by his own obstinacy.

The king of Naples, conformably to preceding regulations, himself, by virtue of his right of advowson, nominated to all the bishoprics which became vacant in his dominions. The pope refused to confirm his choice, and still maintained that the nomination belonged to the Holy See ; he did not however nominate ; and thus the dioceses remained destitute of spiritual superiors, and the people murmured against the Court. At the same time Pius affected to betray a want of consideration for prince Cimitile, the Neapolitan plenipotentiary, and neglected to cultivate the good-will of the marquis della Sambucca  
who

who had shewn a disposition to support him. That minister had sent to Rome one of his sons, whom he destined for the clerical profession; and the pope, under pretence that the young man was guilty of irregularities in his conduct there, refused to give him an abbey for which he made solicitation—as if *the son of a minister* stood in need of personal merit to entitle him to any favour whatever! Never had the scruples of Pius been so unseasonable.

These various incidents had such an effect in exciting mutual animosity, that in 1780 the one party was determined on a complete rupture, while the other looked forward to such an event with resignation. Prince Cimitile, who had for some time been absent, suddenly returned to Rome, and declared to the pope, that, unless the vacant sees were filled without delay, he would entirely quit his court. The pontiff, who had his alternate fits of firmness and weakness, did not on this occasion suffer himself to be intimidated by the threat: but, mistaking obstinacy for dignified steadiness, “What!” said he to his friends—“that court of Naples treats me with greater contempt than a village priest.”

There was a circumstance, however, which encouraged him to that display of resolution, and rendered it less meritorious. He was supported by Bernis and the chevalier Azara: their courts were displeased to see that of Naples betray a greater portion of malevolence than of firmness in the attacks which it made on the papacy. The former, as a cardinal, felt a personal interest in the maintenance of its immunities, of what he called its *acquired rights*. The latter, though more of a philosopher than his friend, as not being bound by the same duties or the same trammels, was nevertheless obliged to follow the instructions of his pious court. In concert they warded off several strokes which the court of Naples aimed at the pontiff; and it was to their interposition alone that his vanity was indebted for a repetition of the homage of the palfrey in 1780. But at Naples the plan of reform was determined: the execution might indeed, in compliance with some temporary circumstances, be postponed; some hopes might be encouraged; some  
relaxation

relaxation might take place on particular pretensions; the land was suspended, but it still continued armed.

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## CHAPTER XX.

*New Wounds inflicted by the Court of Naples on the Privileges of the Court of Rome.*

AT Naples the most alarming projects were in agitation. In 1781 there was question of nothing less than abolishing all the regulations of the Roman chancery—of sending bodies of troops toward Benevento, and Ponte Corvo—and (if these menacing steps should not be sufficient to extort from the pope's obstinacy a confirmation of the bishops nominated by the king) of convoking a provincial council composed of all the prelates in the kingdom, and there making choice of three bishops who should be empowered to proclaim, in the pope's name, the nomination to the vacant sees. The court of Spain again interfered to prevent the scandal which was about to be given to all the catholic part of Europe by a sovereign who was accounted one of the most religious. Prince Cimitile was again ordered to return to Rome. There, without the participation of the cardinal secretary of state whose intentions were suspected, the Neapolitan minister negotiated with cardinals Giraud and Conti an agreement which for a time dried up the source of some disputes.— This transitory reconciliation again procured for the pontiff,

tiff, in 1781, the so much contested enjoyment of the homage paid to the Holy See on the eve of the festival of Saint Peter. That compensation consoled him for the diminution which he saw effected in the kingdom of Naples of that prodigious swarm of monks, whose number, even to his eyes, appeared in the same disadvantageous light as to those of the Neapolitan reformers. There were found—will it be believed?—there were found sixteen thousand mendicant friars distributed in seven hundred convents. Pains were taken to reduce their number to two thousand eight hundred and eight: the bishops were directed to watch over their conduct, and to repress the scandalous excesses in which they indulged themselves.

A pitiful dispute on a point of etiquette soon after revived the dormant animosities. Prince Cimitile was only a minister of the second rank; and, as such, he had, according to the ceremonial of the Roman court, no claim to the title of *Excellency*, which however is so ridiculously lavished in Italy: but he had a right to it, as a knight of the order of Saint Januarius. Nevertheless they had the meanness to refuse it to him; adding at the same time that they would have made no difficulty of allowing it, if he had appeared at Rome un-vested with a diplomatic character. Thus, because he had the honour of representing his sovereign, he was as it were, degraded in the eyes of the papacy. Such absurd inconsistency merited no other notice than that of contempt. But the Neapolitan court, equally puerile in their resentment, were so piqued by it, that they resumed the work of reform which they had suspended. They sequestered several rich benefices; they ordained that for the time to come no person should bequeath to churches, convents, or other ecclesiastic establishments, any legacies in money or immovable property, because, said the royal ordinance, “all those corporations are sufficiently rich.” What cool deliberate reason ought to have done, but had left undone, was the effect of a fit of anger.

No sooner did the court of Rome at any time provoke the resentment of the Neapolitan, than it devised some flattering scheme to appease it. Thus in the present year, on the first application made by the queen, a Ger-  
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man Ex-Jesuit, father Gürtler, who was her spiritual director, obtained a rich benefice ; and, in the warmth of his gratitude, father Gürtler exerted all his influence to effect a reconciliation between the two courts. The negotiations were re-commenced, and promised to be attended with a happy issue, conducted as they were by such conciliating agents as the pope had employed on the occasion—the cardinals Conti, Negroni, and Antonelli. The two former were attached to the rational principles of the catholic courts: Antonelli entertained high notions of the pretended rights of the Holy See ; but he possessed learning, knowledge, and abilities, and had as great an ascendancy over Pius as any one could acquire. Accordingly the mediation of these three commissioners, and the marks of condescension shown by the pope to the sovereigns of Naples, gave room to hope for some success. The parties were beginning to come to a mutual good understanding within a few weeks after the commencement of the year 1782 : the palfrey was again presented in the month of June following, and with the usual pomp. The pontiff dissembled the pain that his sensibility received from several measures which the Neapolitan court still continued to pursue. As they did not seem the offspring of a fit of ill humour, they appeared to him less grating ; or he saw, that, as they were adopted with cool deliberation, they were the result of an irrevocable plan, and he did not choose to render his situation worse by impotent attempts at opposition.

Accordingly his holiness affected an appearance of resignation on receiving the intelligence that one of the principal bulwarks of the papacy—the tribunal of the Holy Office—was falling to ruin in almost every part of Italy ; that in Sicily, more particularly, the sentence of abolition pronounced against it by a philosophic viceroy, the marquis of Caraccioli, had excited, not the indignation of the people as might have been expected, but their enthusiastic joy ; that it was with difficulty they had been restrained from demolishing the former palace of the inquisition ; that the statue of Saint Dominic, so appositely placed at the entrance of that den, had been broken to pieces by the enraged Sicilians ; that all the papers of the Holy Office had been committed to the flames, all its property

property confiscated to the benefit of the crown, and the episcopal tribunals commissioned to take exclusive cognizance of those offences which until then had belonged to its jurisdiction.

At the same period the court of Naples inflicted other and still more painful wounds on the papacy. It declared that every religious order, whose general resided at Rome, should be released from all subjection to him: it forbade the members of those orders to receive from the court of Rome those irregular bulls which arbitrarily conferred on them ecclesiastical titles without the king's concurrence: it granted to the United Greeks, who were very numerous in Sicily, a bishop of their own sect, and exclusively nominated him. And it was only by the public voice of fame that Pius was apprised of all these transactions!

During the course of these events the archbishop of Naples died without having obtained the cardinal's hat.—The petty triumph which this circumstance afforded, somewhat assuaged the mortifying sensations of the pontiff's breast. The king nominated to the vacant see the bishop of Calvi, a man of ducal family, monsignor Joseph Capece Zurlo. He had been a member of the religious order of the Theatins—that order for which the Neapolitan court still retained a peculiar affection.—He at least, who was an intolerant and fanatical priest, could not appear objectionable in the eyes of the papacy.—Probably the king thought him only devout; and surely that could not prove a ground of exclusion for him any more than for the queen. Accordingly the pope had no excuse to plead in opposition to his election.

In electing him, nevertheless, the king had decided a question which the pope considered as yet undecided.—The pontiff, however, neither choosing to acknowledge the king's right, nor willing to found the charge for a new contest, confirmed the new archbishop without expressing in his bull by whom he had been nominated. But this last effort quite exhausted his patience, which entirely failed him when the Neapolitan monarch elevated to the bishopric of Potenza a certain Andrea Serrao, the author of a tract which, according to the decision of the Holy See, breathed

breathed the spirit of Jansenism—that is to say, defended the rights of sovereigns against the pretensions of the court of Rome.

Pius with persevering obstinacy refused to proclaim his election. In vain Serrao repaired to Rome, requested a private audience of the pope, retracted in some measure the assertions which might have given him offence: Pius continued inflexible. The court of Naples was again exasperated, and commanded Serrao to remain at Rome in the Neapolitan minister's hotel until he should have overcome the opposition of the Roman chancellery. But it was all to no purpose. The royal *fiscal* being consulted on this affair, pursuant to his advice the bishop of Potenza was put in possession of one third of the income of his see, that he might be enabled to act with due dignity his part of suitor at the court of Rome. This was treating the stubborn pontiff with great moderation: but, his obstinacy was incurable: his best friends no longer recognised him as the same man that he had once been: they saw him, shunning their prudent counsels, resign himself to the treacherous guidance of his obscure theologists—of a Mammachi and a Zaccaria—instead of consulting those cardinals in whom he had at first appeared to place some confidence.

The year 1783 commenced under circumstances of the most inauspicious aspect to him. Even Spain, that had hitherto been his principal support against the hostilities of the court of Naples, now took part with that court in opposition to him. The Neapolitan minister, highly disgusted with the personal mortifications which he had been obliged to endure, had quitted Rome. The chevalier Azara was commissioned to supply his place: and the pope was not benefited by the change. The Spanish minister spoke to him with a frankness which ought to have alarmed him. “It was time,” he said, “to put an end to those refusals which in the beginning had been only ridiculous, but which might ultimately terminate in fatal consequences. Why drive the Neapolitan Court to extremities? Did it not possess various means of wreaking its vengeance? could it not put in execution a plan which it had already conceived—that of causing the new bishop of Potenza to be confirmed, according to the ancient discipline, by

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“ three bishops of the country, and thus dispensing with  
 “ the interposition of the See of Rome? The repug-  
 “ nance, moreover, which that court felt to the perform-  
 “ ance of the annual homage, was well known: why  
 “ then furnish it with an additional motive for complete-  
 “ ly emancipating itself from the obnoxious ceremony?  
 “ and did his holiness wish to incur the self-reproach of  
 “ having by his own mismanagement forfeited a preroga-  
 “ tive so flattering to his vanity?”

Pius, however, was so obstinate, and so ill advised, that even this last argument did not shake him in his purpose. He insisted that Serrao should make recantation of his *dangerous* maxims in a particular formula which he himself would dictate to him. The court of Naples, wearied by these vain quibbles, sent information to the pontiff, that, unless Serrao were proclaimed without delay or restriction, measures of extremity should immediately be adopted, which his holiness would have reason to regret. The crisis was now become more alarming than at any former period, and Pius began to be intimidated.

He felt the necessity of calling in the aid of counsellors somewhat more influential than those to whom he had before given his confidence. He therefore intrusted the interests of the Holy See to the hands of cardinals Antonelli, Albani, Boschi, Zelada, and Cafali. We have already made known the character of Antonelli. Albani was dean of the Sacred College, possessed some abilities and considerable influence, and was one of the partisans of the defunct society. Boschi was a man endowed with information, prudence, a luminous understanding, and liable to no other imputation than that of a remaining attachment to the Jesuits. We have more than once spoken of Zelada, who was acute, enlightened, but of an essentially mild and conciliating disposition. Finally, Cafali was a creature of the Jesuits, little inclined to toleration, rigidly inflexible, but of severe probity.

Such were the five counsellors entrusted with the critical negotiation. They conducted it with honesty and dexterity, and succeeded in removing the chief obstacle  
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that stood in the way of its happy conclusion. The pope at length consented to proclaim not only the bishop of Potenza, but also twenty-one other prelates who had been nominated by the king. Much time had already been lost in deciding whether a bishop should be proclaimed in this manner or in that : but the source of theologic subtilties was not yet exhausted. Pius considered himself as having made a great effort, and expected to reap the reward of what he had done : in short, he hoped to regain in few days all the ground that so numerous reforms and so many dangerous publications had caused him to lose. Serrao had given scandal by his heterodox assertions : he must now give edification by a profession of faith very authentic, very circumstantial.—“ But, will it not be sufficient,” asked the good bishop of Potenza, “ if I exculpate myself from the imputations brought against me, and acknowledge the pope as the supreme head, and centre of unity, of the catholic church ?”—This was not enough to satisfy Pius, who liked to enter into particulars. He insisted that Serrao should give verbal answers to eleven questions which he proposed to him, and of which almost every one afforded proof that his holiness was very imperfectly acquainted with the spirit of the times. Benedict XIV., even Ganganelli himself, would have kept them confined within the privacy of their own bosoms, because they were sensible that there are certain delicate chords which will not bear to be touched. The following are some of those questions : and from them the world may judge of the degree of intellectual illumination possessed by the wisest members of the Sacred College.

“ Do you feel a sincere veneration for the Holy See ?

“ Do you acknowledge in the pope an entire and *unlimited* authority over every thing connected with the maintenance of religion and ecclesiastic discipline ?

“ Have you never attempted to infringe the bull *Unigenitus* ?

“ Do you think that the Italian catechism, attributed to Monsieur de Fleury, stands in need of correction ?

“ Do you approve of the religious societies confirmed

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“ by the Holy See ? and do you think, that, while they  
 “ punctually follow the rules of their respective institu-  
 “ tions, they may be useful to the church ?

“ Have you ever disapproved of the possession of  
 “ church property when it is duly administered ?

“ Do you intend to submit your public conduct to the  
 “ inspection and judgment of the Holy See ? ”

Was it possible that Pius could have flattered himself with a hope that these questions should meet the approbation of the Neapolitan court, on whose measures they passed an indirect censure ? The event proves, that, on this as on many other occasions, he had been deficient in foresight. The king's ministers and theologists being consulted, unanimously declared in answer that the pope's summons was an innovation, and even an insult to the king, as likewise to the bishop, who had never afforded any room for affixing on him a suspicion of heresy ; that the questions themselves confounded the limits of the two powers, and infringed the rights of the temporal sovereignty. The Neapolitan Minister received order to represent the matter in this light to the pope, and to inform him that if he would not be satisfied with the declaration offered by the bishop of Potenza, his Majesty would recall him from his embassadorial mission, and adopt other measures in that common cause which equally interested all the catholic governments. At the same time an injunction was laid on the bishop of even adding to his declaration that it was not to be otherwise understood than in a sense conformable to the rights of sovereignty and the constitutional laws of the Two Sicilies.

Thus, instead of a triumph from that mistaken measure, Pius reaped a refusal, mortifications, and new menaces.— Too late he perceived that it was again necessary to yield—and the cardinals, on being consulted, advised him to make a virtue of the necessity. Zelada, uniformly consistent in his conciliatory disposition, most of all contributed to determine the pontiff's compliance. On those terms the ridiculous ceremony of the palfrey was again performed that year.

In the year following, the Neapolitan court proceeded in the suppression of monasteries, and the reformation of some of those numerous abuses which are ever the unfailing

ing fruits of sacerdotal influence. In its conduct was discernible a mixture of philosophy, of religious veneration for some objects which it thought respectable, of tenderness for others which the people would not tamely have suffered to be wrested from them, and which even the sovereign authority itself was interested in supporting. Hence those half-measures, which prove either a want of capacity to embrace a plan in its whole extent, or a want of strength and courage to carry it into execution. Too little was done toward enlightening the people; enough, to afflict the court of Rome. The king prohibited all future application to it for dispensations: he asserted his right of advowson over all the churches in his dominions: nothing more was left to the pope than the privilege of consecrating and giving his benediction to prelates, and convoking councils. To the king was reserved the care of presiding at elections, protecting the clergy, and disposing of the surplus of all church revenues for the benefit of the poor: to the bishops was given the faculty of granting matrimonial dispensations in all degrees of consanguinity, and of exercising over all the religious orders a jurisdiction uncontrolled by concurrence or appeal.

The pope, thoroughly convinced of his own impotence, thought himself still happy that even his interposition was in any case desired. The king of Naples wishing to relieve the distresses in which the unfortunate inhabitants of Apulia and Calabria had recently been involved—pious foundations, devotional legacies, the excess of the clerical revenues, were naturally marked out for those offices of humanity, or, if you please, of Christian charity. The roman pontiff, whose consent might have been deemed altogether superfluous, was invited to give his sanction to those measures. With prompt alacrity he acquiesced in the wishes of the Neapolitan court, and even stretched his condescension so far as to permit that all the clergy in the kingdom should for the same benevolent purpose be subjected to a tax in proportion to their abilities. It might have been asked on which side the condescension really existed—in the monarch who solicited such permissions, or in the pope who granted them? But, what will perhaps appear yet more astonishing, the  
Neapolitan

Neapolitan clergy showed themselves less tractable than the head of the church himself appeared. Conscious of the strength he derived from this concurrence of the spiritual with the temporal authority, the king conceived that he might without scruple or danger suppress a great number of convents in Calabria. The priests had the boldness to oppose the suppression, and grounded their disobedience on the famous bull *In cœnâ Domini*, which, among other political heresies, contains this principle, that "whoever does not respect the inviolability of the property of the clergy, is stricken with anathema."—The Court of Rome were strongly suspected of a secret agency in that resistance: but the king had their overt consent; and, availing himself of that advantage, he ordained that all those who, in opposition to his edicts, should appeal to that bull which was so justly proscribed, should be deprived of their temporal property and treated as foreigners, and that whoever should print and publish it, should be punished as guilty of a crime against the state.

This measure was not a little bold for an Italian sovereign, and especially for a prince of religious character. Ferdinand nevertheless proceeded yet farther. Of a hundred and thirty-nine bishoprics in the monarchy of the Two Sicilies, only twenty-six were acknowledged to be of royal advowson: all the others had till this time been subject to the pope's nomination. Suddenly the king of Naples, encouraged by the example of his brother-in-law, revived his claim to the right of indiscriminately nominating to all the episcopal sees in his dominions. The influence of the court of Madrid, which had for some time repressed that pretension, was beginning to lose its former weight: the Neapolitan monarch, as he advanced in age, was grown weary of continuing subject to the control of Charles III., his father: the queen also was very impatient of that yoke; and the chevalier Acton, who already enjoyed considerable authority, encouraged the royal pair in their resistance. There even existed a very violent animosity between that minister and the count de Florida-Blanca; and, as they governed their respective courts with almost despotic sway, a coolness had taken place between the Spanish and Neapolitan sovereigns,



vereigns, which was each moment liable to degenerate into an open quarrel.

While affairs were thus circumstanced, the cardinal de Bernis, in May 1784, paid a visit to Naples. The queen reposed; or at least affected to repose, equal confidence in his intellects and his intentions. Bernis, by his frankness and conciliating dexterity, succeeded in accomplishing a partial reconciliation, which however was soon followed by more violent storms:—but these do not properly belong to our subject.

During a fortnight that Bernis spent at the court of Naples, he had occasion to plead the cause of the papacy; and he performed the task with that insinuating address which was so natural to him, and which did not appear to fail in its effect on the queen of Naples, though herself so eminently skilled in that kind of seduction. He spoke however in the language of an ecclesiastic prince, which, notwithstanding all his philosophy, he understood as well as any of his brethren. The Holy See, he observed, had already gratified the Neapolitan court with numerous sacrifices: if the latter required further concessions of that kind, it must expect to meet with considerable repugnance. A short time before Bernis' arrival, a fit of peevishness had produced the effect of breaking off a negotiation which had been commenced respecting the principal grounds of the dispute: for peevishness had great influence in all the determinations of that unsteady and capricious court. Bernis, however, succeeded not only in removing all the prejudices which stood in the way of pacification, but also in gaining attention to what he had to propose. He obtained, that, at the approaching festival of the holy apostles, the pontifical vanity should again be feasted with the homage of the palfrey: he extorted some vague promises, and carried back to Rome some hopes which the pope participated, but which were soon disappointed.

No long time elapsed before the pontiff learned that an almost unlimited use was made of the bull by which he had authorised the suppression of some monasteries, and the incorporation of others into one. That measure had been pursued to such lengths, that it had, in the language of the Roman court, degenerated into a perfect system of *robbery*. The nuns of the suppressed convents had renounced

nounced the rules of their order, and, released from the confinement of the cloister, exhibited to the world the *scandalous* spectacle of a secular life. Some good souls had sent to Naples a sum of money destined for the canonisation of I know not what female saint. That sum was diverted from its *sacred* destination, and applied to the purchase of corn. Could such a sacrilege be pardoned? And it was at the same epoch that the Neapolitan monarch, to fill up the measure, renewed his pretensions to the right of nominating to all the bishoprics in his dominions.

The pope thought it again necessary to have recourse to the court of Spain: he first applied to its minister, Azara, and gave him unlimited powers to terminate the disputes between the papacy and the king of Naples. The Spanish minister determined to prove that his holiness's confidence was not in this instance misplaced. The chevalier Acton at the very commencement of the business showed himself sufficiently disposed to labour at an accommodation. Strong prepossessions were entertained against him as well at Madrid as at Versailles: he wished to evince by his conduct that he was not so averse to conciliation as he was accused of being; and from these favourable symptoms the court of Rome conceived some hopes. It was moreover supported by the marquis della Sambucca, who forgetting his private causes of complaint against the pope, remembered that he was indebted for his promotion to the solicitations of that court and the intrigues of the Jesuits.

But the joy of Pius was ever destined to be of short duration. Scarcely had he begun to resume some confidence when he learned that measures were continued in Calabria to an extent far exceeding his intentions; that the churches and other ecclesiastic foundations which had survived the disasters of that province, were secularised, and that the property which had belonged to them was applied by the king of Naples to establishments of public utility. If Pius had entertained sounder notions of policy, if his charity had been greater than his devotion and his selfishness, he would have applauded these changes: but, viewing them in no other light than as additional infringements of his rights and of the immunities of

of the church, he felt them as so many deep wounds inflicted on his bosom. His comforter Azara advised him to have direct recourse to the interposition of the king of Spain. Charles III. accordingly interposed at Naples through the medium of the marquis della Sambucca, in whom he cared for the rival and the enemy of the chevalier Acton.

It was customary with Pius to go every year, in the spring season, personally to visit the works at the Pontine marshes, and to spend a few days at Terracina near the frontier of the kingdom of Naples. It was a relaxation, a diversion from his chagrins, a feast to his self-love. La Sambucca caused a proposal to be made to him that he should take advantage of that journey, to treat in person respecting the affairs on which the two courts were yet divided. For that purpose la Sambucca was to repair to Terracina: but previously to the interview, he wished that some principal points should be settled, especially that some accommodatory medium should be adopted respecting the nomination to bishoprics; that the pope should acknowledge the king's right to it, with some modifications. Pius listened to these propositions, and, through the organ of the chevalier Azara, said that he would be found "very reasonable:" but he represented that the points on which his concession was required antecedently to all negotiation, were precisely those which were to be discussed. La Sambucca insisted on their preliminary admission, and confidentially intimated to the Spanish minister, that, if his holiness set out without having given a previous assurance to that effect, he would only expose himself to a failure in the object of the interview, and prepare a triumph for his enemy Acton, whose apparent good will to the court of Rome had been but transitory. "No!" replied Pius to the Spanish minister, "I cannot consent to an absolute and unlimited nomination: the wound would be too surely mortal. But why might not the king consent to a modification? why not allow me the faculty of choosing one of three candidates whom he should propose to me?"

The chevalier Azara was not a little astonished to observe the persevering uniformity with which he was particularly singled out as the interpreter on these occasions—he,

he, who had been so severely calumniated at Naples, who had been represented to the king and queen as a stern intractable man, and a fomenter of discord between them and the Spanish monarch. But he was candid and honest: he felt an attachment to the pope; and, although in his own mind he could justly appreciate the pontiff's pretensions, he aided him to the utmost of his power at the court of Naples. He assured the royal pair that he persisted in the disposition to serve them with zeal, but at the same time represented to them that they must not expect to gain at the first onset the very object which was the ground of the contest. La Sambucca was inflexible. "If the articles on which I insist," said he, "be not determined, I will not go to Terracina." The indignation of the pope was roused by this obstinacy: but reflection, aided by the counsel of the chevalier Azara, calmed his passion; and he pledged his word that he would consent, provided such a complexion were given to the business as should at least save his honour. It appears that La Sambucca was not satisfied with these vague assurances: for, though Pius set out for Terracina on the 9th of May (1785), the proposed interview did not take place.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Mortifications received by Pius from the Court of Naples.—  
Abolition of the Homage of the Palfrey.*

TOWARD the same period Pius experienced from the Neapolitan sovereigns a mortification which he sensibly felt. On the 30th of April they embarked for Leghorn, whence they proceeded to the northern parts of Italy, openly affecting to avoid passing near the sovereign pontiff. Considering the footing on which they then stood with him, an interview would have been embarrassing; and they were not sorry to give him that indirect proof of their dissatisfaction. They were accompanied by the grand-duke of Tuscany, and met the emperor at Parma. The only town of the papal territory in which they stopped was Bologna, where the legate, cardinal Buoncompagni who afterward became secretary of state, received them with that nobleness of manner which was his characteristic feature. They were sensibly pleased with his reception, visited the curiosities of the town, behaved with the most winning politeness; but not a word was said concerning their disputes with the Holy See. Pius was tempted to send his nephew to them at Pisa, to invite them to pass through Rome on their return. But it was insinuated to him that such a step would only be a gratuitous and unavailing derogation from his dignity. The Neapolitan sovereigns returned to their own dominions without affording him any token of their remembrance.

After their return they gave him new disquietudes. They received fourteen chests filled with the plate of the suppressed churches, which they sent to the mint: they  
treated

treated canonries as dignities of a purely temporal nature, and disposed of them without the concurrence of the papacy: they supported the religious orders in their independence of their generals residing at Rome. After such measures, there remained, in the opinion of the pontiff, but one more step to heresy, or at least to schism.

During these transactions cardinal Pallavicini died; and the choice of a successor to replace him was attended with embarrassment. The mind of Pius, as we shall presently see, was prepossessed against cardinal Buoncompagni: but he sacrificed his repugnance to various considerations, especially to the hope that, as the cardinal was agreeable to the court of Naples, he might there render service to the Holy See. Accordingly one of the first steps of the new secretary of state was to repair to Naples: but, instead of exhibiting himself to advantage in an amiable and winning character which he was very capable of assuming, he appeared in no other than that of the cardinal and the minister. He returned from his fruitless mission, leaving in his stead a Milanese prelate, who, more seriously employed in political affairs than in religious discussions, succeeded in determining the boundaries of the two states between Abruzzo and Umbria. But the ecclesiastic disputes were becoming more and more embittered: in this same year the king further prohibited his subjects to receive any indulgences from Rome without his sanction. Our grand children will smile when informed that even so late as the year 1785 it required an exertion of courage in a sovereign to subject a tribute of that kind to the control of his authority.

The situation of the pontiff, with respect to Naples, became yet worse at the commencement of the year 1786. La Sambucca, his only remaining support, was at length obliged to yield in the struggle against the chevalier Acton. The interests of the papacy thenceforward depended on the marquis del Marco, minister of justice and of ecclesiastic affairs. Formed in the school of Tanucci, and a devoted creature of the chevalier Acton, he had, in addition to his natural duplicity of character, no other talents to recommend him than a blind submission to the will of that chief minister, and to the court of Rome a great stock of malevolence which he mistook for philosophy.

philosophy. An antagonist much more formidable—because he was really a philosopher, and had during his Sicilian viceroyalty exhibited proofs of his boldly reforming spirit—was the marquis Caraccioli, who succeeded la Sambucca in the department of foreign affairs. The Jesuits and other confidential friends of the pontiff trembled at this revolution; nor was it long ere their apprehensions were realised. The duchess de Maddaloni was at this time engaged in a suit to obtain a divorce from her husband: she gained her cause before the consistory of Naples: the duke appealed from the sentence; and the king referred the matter to a commission. The nuncio attempted to interpose the spiritual authority of the head of the church, because there was question of a sacrament: but he was over-ruled, and informed that marriage, inasmuch as it is a contract, must ever lie within the jurisdiction of the temporal power. A stronger or more explicit decision could not have been expected from a protestant court.

The fate of the religious orders, which yet remained undecided, was definitively determined by an ordinance in which the king was made to speak with a boldness of language at which himself must have been astonished. It set forth that his majesty, after mature examination, was thoroughly convinced that the subjection of the religious societies to generals residing out of his dominions was “an abuse, a violation of the rights of the bishops, “the offspring of those ages of darkness and spiritual “calamity, of those false decretals forged by an impostor “who had suffered himself to be led astray by his blind “affection for the court of Rome.”

This measure, and especially its motives, proved a thunder-stroke to the Holy See and its adherents. Theologians are consulted: the generals of the religious orders assemble in the pope's palace, and draw up a protest in opposition to the *rash* ordinance of the Neapolitan monarch. Unavailing clamours! The mal-contented could not on this occasion expect to receive support from the court of Spain: that court had itself been for some years meditating a similar reform.

The court of Rome, however, found in the new Neapolitan minister a greater propensity to conciliation than

than they had at first expected. The marquis Caraccioli and the cardinal Buoncompagni entertained for each other a reciprocal esteem. Both prudent and enlightened men, superior, each in his respective country, to the surrounding crowd of their contemporaries, they would perhaps have been of the same opinion if they had been placed in the same sphere of life. They mutually sought each other's acquaintance. Caraccioli broached a direct correspondence with the cardinal, for the purpose of amicably terminating the differences which kept their courts at variance. After they had begun to understand each other a little, the pope sent count Galeppi to Naples without any ostensible commission, but simply to hear whatever the Neapolitan government might be disposed to say to him: for the Roman court were not dazzled by those advances; and it was with good reason that they were not. At the moment when a reconciliation seemed approaching, the tribunal of Santa Clara pronounced that three of the bishoprics which were the subjects of the contest, being of royal advowson, ought to be subject to the king's nomination. The archbishop of Naples whose exemplary virtues were alloyed by a fanatic zeal for the court of Rome, the entire Sacred College, and the pontiff himself, loudly exclaimed against the decision; and there was question of proceeding to violent measures. But the prudent friends of Pius calmed his mind, and he checked his resentment lest he should cause a miscarriage of the negotiation which was about to be commenced.

It began under happy auspices. Galeppi was highly pleased with the queen's disposition. Dextrous, insinuating, successfully adopting every tone and especially that of confidence, she enchanted the incipient negotiator. He had imagined that Caraccioli's influence was to be his principal, his only resource: yet he found the queen even more conciliating than the minister. But while he suffered himself to be dazzled by these appearances, a sequestration was laid on the very abbey which cardinal Buoncompagni possessed in the kingdom of Naples, and part of its revenues appropriated to useful establishments: a laudable reform, without doubt, though the time and the object were ill chosen. Was this step the effect of duplicity?



duplicity ? or did it proceed merely from the want of reflection ? These are questions not easily to be answered even by those who have had the closest and most frequent access to the queen of Naples. That procedure, liable at least to the charge of incivility, was yet quite recent when the queen, perhaps moved by compassion, wrote with her own hand to cardinal Buoncompagni, that notwithstanding *appearances*, the king was desirous of an accommodation with his holiness. Soon after, some efforts were made to display a conduct consistent with this assurance : recommendation was given to observe a degree of tenderness toward the court of Rome, at least in point of form ; and the tribunals were directed to shew some regard for the religious orders.

At length Galeppi succeeded in removing a first difficulty. In September 1786, it was agreed that the king should thenceforward nominate to all the bishoprics in his dominions ; that the pope should be empowered to dispose of sixty thousand ducats of church-revenues, in favour of Neapolitan subjects, and of six thousand toward the support of his nuncio at Naples. Galeppi would have wished to obtain further successes, and especially to effect a suspension of the suppression of monasteries : but his efforts were of no avail. Perhaps, however, they might not have been unsuccessful if he had chosen to leave the business entirely in the hands of the marquis Caraccioli, who, to the great astonishment of the world, was become at his court the principal advocate of the papacy—he who, both in England and in France, had so often indulged his wit at the expense of religion—who had so slightly treated its ministers in Sicily—who had more than once been heard to say at Paris, “ If ever I become minister to the king of Naples, I’ll find means to render him independent of the grand mufti of Rome.” But Galeppi wished to multiply his means : a hundred agents were employed in the business of his negotiation : it failed, and he returned to Rome in April 1787, carrying with him a plan of accommodation which the apostolic chancery refused to admit.

Instead of being astonished at the condescension of a court of which the two most influential men displayed a boldness of principal so alarming to the cause of orthodoxy  
—instead

—instead of appearing grateful for it—Pius asserted that he had done every thing in his power to satisfy the king of Naples, and that it would not be his fault if an accommodation should not take place. It was particularly to the French and Spanish ministers that he held this language, hoping that their courts would interpose in his favour. But, at Madrid as well as at Versailles, people were tired of those incessantly reviving disputes, of those alternations of stubbornness and complaisance, of reason and extravagance. Pius therefore saw himself abandoned to his own resources, and called in the aid of his favourite remedy: Buoncompagni was directed to compose a long memorial, in which he endeavoured to prove the legitimacy of the pontiff's pretensions, and especially the *inviolable jurisdiction* of his nuncio at Naples. A prelate was appointed to convey this memorial to Galeppi, who had returned to his post; but by the king's order it was coolly and briefly answered that the pope's pretensions were inadmissible, and that it was no longer possible to think of an accommodation.

For a long time back every thing had been done at Naples in fits of peevishness. In all the operations of the government it was easy to discover the influence of a woman, who alternately vibrated between benevolence and animosity, and followed at one time the temperate counsels of Caraccioli, at another the violent suggestions of Acton, but oftener the impulses of her own caprice.

After such a repulsive answer, could any man have expected to see the negotiations once more renewed before the conclusion of the year? Pius, it is true, made the first advances, and came forward with more moderate pretensions. Caraccioli signified, that, since the pope shewed himself more reasonable, it became easy to effect a reconciliation, which the king himself was extremely desirous; but that it was necessary to lay aside all those little wiles, all those subtilities, which had caused the preceding negotiations to miscarry.

The cardinal secretary of state thought himself the person most capable of realising the new hopes which the pontiff was beginning to entertain; and with that idea he repaired to Naples in the month of October. A suspicion prevailed that a zeal for the interests of the papacy

pany was not his real motive for undertaking that journey. Gorani, in his *Secret Memoirs of the Courts of Italy*, asserts that he was principally attracted to Naples by his desire of revisiting a woman with whom he had been very intimately acquainted at Bologna; and the libertine conduct of the cardinal gives credibility to the assertion. He probably accomplished the object in which his heart was concerned; but he failed in that which would have flattered his vanity. He was extremely pleasing in his manner: he was well received; and he proposed a plan of conciliation in which the pope made some new sacrifices: but they were not deemed sufficient.

Gorani relates that Buoncompagni, fully persuaded that he should find the king more accommodating than his ministers, requested of him a private audience, at which, after having with his insinuating eloquence urged to him his apostolic arguments, he thus concluded his harangue—"Your majesty may rest assured, that your condescension to the Holy See is the only mean of avoiding a multitude of unpleasant circumstances, and of acquiring in all events a faithful and steady friend."—"Cardinal," replied the king—"I have listened to you as long as you thought proper: do you now listen to me in turn. I was not afraid to displease the king of Spain my father when I felt it my duty to defend the rights of my crown. Can you then imagine that I shall entertain any fear in defending them against the pretensions and subtilities of your sovereign? No! nothing can prevail on me to consent to the demands of Pius VI. because I deem them unjust."

We think ourselves authorized to question the authenticity of this dialogue, as bearing too little conformity to the characters of the speakers. The cardinal's friends have never had any knowledge of it: and besides, if he had carried home from Naples so explicit a declaration, how could the pontiff, immediately after Buoncompagni's mission, have indulged in that security which the best-informed observers remarked in him? However that point be determined, the cardinal returned to Rome without having made any progress in the bu-

ness; and the year 1787 concluded amid cold demonstrations of mutual good understanding.

And now commenced that year which was to inflict on the pope the most painful of all mortifications that it was possible for him to experience. The month of June was far advanced, and no measures had yet been taken for the solemn presentation of the palfrey. No new cause of complaint had arisen on either side: how then account for the delay? for his holiness could not even for a moment admit the idea of a total omission of the accustomed homage. Saint Peter's eve at length arrived: the constable Colonna, the hero of the ceremony, has not yet made his appearance: but "the annual tribute at least will be sent."—The annual tribute is equally invisible.

Pius was deeply affected: he would have wished to avoid exposing himself to ridicule by the utterance of impotent complaints: but he dreaded the burst of universal indignation. The fatal hour is come: he ascends his throne—with mournful countenance surveys the surrounding assembly of cardinals, and an immense auditory who participate his dejection—pronounces a discourse, which he endeavours to render impressive by pathos of tone, and in which he accumulates arguments that to him appear unanswerable. He reminds his audience that he has "done every thing to conduct the negotiations to a happy conclusion: he has written conciliatory letters; but the king of Naples has not answered them; and, without any previous notice, he now offers him the affront of suddenly discontinuing a homage which he had constantly paid him since his accession to the throne—a homage guaranteed by the express promise of his father Charles III.—a homage enforced by several bulls, and, among others, by that of Julius II. which denounces the threat of ecclesiastical censures against the king who should omit it." He quotes those bulls, repeats the passages from them, not now in that thundering voice which he was fond enough of assuming in the midst of his court on state occasions, but in that melancholy and almost suppliant tone which is employed to move an incensed conqueror.

The

The few moderate men who heard him were struck with admiration on observing how successfully he had been able to restrain or at least to soften the expression of his chagrin; while the crowd of fanatics bestowed on his forbearance the name of base pusillanimity. But when, at a distance from the scene of action, we represent to ourselves an old man, a sovereign, fighting through vexation because a horse has failed to come and pay him his periodical obeisance, we no longer participate either the admiration of the one party or the indignation of the other, but look down with pity on the weakness and vanity of frail mortals.

In the evening of that sinister day, at the moment when the Neapolitan ambassador should have presented himself, the *fiscal* of the Apostolic Chamber gravely made his protest respecting the delay of the accustomed homage. The pope admitted the protest, and thought he thereby saved his honour and his rights. He next wrote to the king of Naples a letter in circumspèct language, but in a pathetic strain, which however had lost all its force on those to whom it was now addressed. He communicated his production to the Spanish minister, who greatly applauded the form he had given to it. The chevalier Azara and the cardinal de Bernis still continued to be his confidants and comforters; though, to avoid involving them in difficulties, he had ceased to apply to them for advice. The two sage ministers, who were witnesses of his affliction, were very capable of appreciating its object, but could not forbear giving him testimonies of their sympathy.

On the seventh of the following July, Ricciardelli the Neapolitan *chargé-des-affaires*, came to present to cardinal Buoncompagni the twelve thousand Roman crowns which his court once more condescended to pay as a tribute. "The principal circumstance of that homage is its solemnity," replied the cardinal, rejecting the proffered sum. After the expiration of a fortnight, Ricciardelli delivered to him a memorial setting forth, that—the pope having refused to receive the twelve thousand Roman crowns—the king his master, desirous, as in preceding years, to make a pious offering to the apostles Peter and Paul, had ordered him to deposit it in

a public bank where it should await the disposal of the Apostolic Chamber. The cardinal conceived he was supporting the dignity of the papacy by replying in another memorial that the *pious offering*, without the palfrey did not fulfil the engagements contracted by the king of Naples and his predecessors to the Holy See; that, in consequence, the *fiscal* of the Apostolic Chamber had made a second protest, and that the bank in which the sum was deposited had received directions to hold it at signor Ricciardelli's disposal. The latter sent back the memorial, the protest, &c. because he could not receive them without an order from his court.

This contest of empty formalities did not however terminate the dispute. The king of Naples stooped to pick up the gantlet which the cardinal had flung down before him. He answered his memorial at great length, and in the style of a lawyer: he intimated that the differences might have been terminated if Galeppi had employed less of subtilty and more of sincerity in his negotiations, and if cardinal Buoncompagni had been authorised to conclude definitively: he did not refuse the customary oblation; but he thought the pomp of the ceremony at least unnecessary; since it was not expressed in the act of investiture: that act itself was superfluous, since the Neapolitan monarchs possessed their kingdom by the right of conquest, and its enfeoffment was a usurpation, which could only be borne in ages of ignorance and barbarism.

Never before had any catholic prince spoken in so bold language to the court of Rome, whose astonishment was now almost equal to their affliction. Cardinal Borgia, secretary of the Propaganda and a learned theologist, was appointed to reply to it. But what arguments could he advance in opposition to force combined with reason? Quotations, the authority of fathers of the church and of the councils, ancient *Concordata*, recent regulations! In this memorial, which was alternately learned and pathetic, the pontiff enumerated all the steps he had already taken to effect a reconciliation with the court of Naples: but he could not, he said, without rendering himself contemptible, suffer a cruel wound to be inflicted on the authority of the Holy See.

The

The Neapolitan sovereign condescended to reply to this erudite homily. He was obliged to pay some deference to the prejudices of his subjects as well as to satisfy his own scruples. He was willing, as the French monarchs had often done before, to kiss the pontiff's toe, and at the same time to bind his hands in chains. He assumed a tone of frankness and candor, which probably was intended as mockery by those who dictated his reply, though from his mouth it was sincere. In mild and almost humble terms he represented that he considered the pecuniary tribute as fulfilling the whole of his duty to the Apostolic See; that the pomp of the ceremony was not matter of obligation; that the presentation of the palfrey was a custom which could not be traced farther back than the preceding century. The truth was, that no express mention of that ridiculous formality had been made in the act of investiture given to the present sovereign, though it had been mentioned in that granted to the king his father, who guaranteed it for himself and *his successors*.

It was serving the court of Rome according to their taste, to engage with them in a polemic discussion. Pius and his secretary of state, who were seldom in unison, differed in opinion respecting the proper form to be given to the answer which the king of Naples expected. The pontiff wished to swell it out to a voluminous memorial, under the persuasion that arguments derive additional strength from their bulk. Meanwhile, to fill up the time that must elapse before the quarrel were decided, the Neapolitan government persevered in the pursuit of its plan, gave orders for the sequestration of all the abbeys and simple benefices, assumed the right of nominating to them all, and burst the last remaining ties by which the religious societies were yet bound to their generals.

The Holy See suspended its labours, and tried, if possible, to stop the court of Naples in its too rapid career. —About this period, an incident of a private nature gave birth to new disputes. The archbishop of Naples had dissolved the marriage of the duchess di Mattalona\*, and, without

\* In page 45 she is designated by the name of *Maddaloni*.

without the concurrence of the Holy See, had given her a certificate declaring her at liberty to marry again. A bishop of Motula had afterward taken up that cause. This, according to Pius, was a violation of all the rules of ecclesiastic discipline : wherefore, to apply a speedy remedy to these disorders, he drew up two briefs, the one for the duchess, the other for the bishop, and directed his internuncio to deliver them to the parties. The duchess refused to receive that which was addressed to her, and refused in such a tone as forbade all attempt to insist on the point. The internuncio was disconcerted, and said within himself, " Let us act more adroitly with the bishop : let us lay for him an ambuscade from which he cannot escape without causing open scandal." Accordingly he took him unaware, and, with his brief in his hand, attempted to offer him a sort of violence. The bishop of Motula was a man of rough manner : he rudely thrust back the emissary, and even made use of language disrespectful to the Holy See. The poor internuncio had still less reason to boast of the success of his second attempt, which, though unsuccessful, irritated the court of Naples, from whom he suddenly received an order to quit the kingdom within eight and forty hours. The name of *treason* was given to the audacity by which he had been prompted to introduce, without the king's consent, those acts emanating from a foreign power. But the same hand which signed this sentence sought to alleviate its consequences, and recommended the internuncio to the pope's clemency, because, said his majesty, his conduct had been irreproachable in every instance except that *criminal attempt*.

The court of Naples, with its usual inconsistency, soon passing from rage to repentance, wrote to the pope, as to disarm his resentment, and proposed to renew the negotiation : but the wound was already inflicted. Pius sensibly felt this affront, which presaged to him many others in succession. Cardinal Buoncompagni unbosoms his painful feelings to the cardinal de Bernis, and supplicates him to procure the interposition of the eldest son



tion of the church \* in behalf of her chief. This happened toward the conclusion of the year 1788, a period when Louis XVI. was himself involved in considerable difficulties: his intercession therefore was feeble, and of very little efficacy.

An unfortunate combination of circumstances accumulated the subjects of dispute between the Roman court and that of Naples.

The order of Malta was at this time rent by divisions which extended to these two courts. The ambiguous existence of that order was a fruitful source of dissension. The grand-master, as a temporal sovereign, was a vassal of the crown of Naples: as chief of an order, he was subject to the Holy See: hence a frequent clashing of jurisdiction. At this period, existed at Malta a very violent quarrel between a knight named de Loras and the commander Dolomieu. The latter having displeased the court of Naples, had at the instigation of his adversary, been banished from the kingdom of the two Sicilies. Returning to Malta, he there suffered a second disgrace, which was a consequence of the former: he was deprived of his office of representative in the superior council of Malta. From this sentence he appealed to the Roman Rota, as the tribunal to whose jurisdiction were subject all the judgments of the order. The Rota had the boldness to absolve the commander, and alleged, as the motive of its decision, that the cause of Dolomieu's condemnation was hidden, and "did not appear to be of a criminal nature."

This was, to say the least of it, a daring measure, considering the situation in which the papacy then stood with respect to the Neapolitan court. The latter took offence at it, and, long accustomed to disregard the restraints of delicacy in its relations with the sovereign pontiff, imperiously demanded the reversal of a decision "equally inconsiderate as erroneous and absurd." The cardinal secretary of state, who by this time was thoroughly weary of his post at the helm in the midst of so many storms, would not venture to undertake the task of writing an answer, as desired. A congregation of cardinals was consulted, who pronounced that, in criminal causes

\* His most Christian majesty, the king of France,

causes of the knights of Malta, appeals to the court of Rome must always be admitted. Cardinal Buoncompagni, confident in this decision, replied that the Rota was authorised to act as it had done, and that it by no means merited the imputations thrown out against it. The court of Versailles protected Dolomieu: but his adversary, excelling him in the arts of intrigue, had found means to interest great personages in his own behalf, and procured powerful recommendations from all quarters. The court of Rome attempted to struggle against so formidable a party: but even the friends of the Holy See were of opinion that it too frequently received appeals from the grand-master, and that by such affectation of paramount authority it only exasperated the governments which already had causes of complaint against the papacy. The Neapolitan government in particular was thereby rendered more averse to conciliation.

The pope meanwhile had concluded his voluminous performance, and now condescended to communicate it to cardinal Buoncompagni, who, not having expected that mark of confidence, felt himself flattered by it, though he nevertheless severely criticised his holiness's production. "That memorial," said he to his friends, "is bristled with quotations, overloaded with authorities: the pope has succeeded in rendering it at once tiresomely dull and inconclusive: the king of Naples will never take the trouble of perusing it: but he will cause it to be answered with equal prolixity; and thus, instead of remedying the disease, we shall find that we have only increased its virulence."—The memorial, however, without undergoing any alteration, was dispatched in February 1789, and produced the effect which the cardinal had predicted.

At the approach of the festival of the apostles Peter and Paul, the epoch of that ceremony of which the suspension was productive to his holiness of so many sleepless nights, he wrote to the king of Naples, in hopes of reviving some scruples in his breast. Vain attempt!—the palfrey did not make his appearance; and the *fiscal* renewed his protest, but with yet greater solemnity than on the preceding occasion; recalling to memory that the offering of the pious donation was to be made "*cum præsentatione*  
"*paraphreni*

“ *paraphreni albi decenter ornati, per ipsum regem vel per ejus*  
 “ *specialem legatum regio charactere munitum, non alicui mi-*  
 “ *nistro pontificio vel cameræ apostolicæ, sed IPSI ROMANO*  
 “ *PONTIFICI, PUBLICE, et cum solitis solemnitatibus, ac in*  
 “ *RECOGNITIONEM MEMORATI DOMINII \*.*” Such  
 were the expressions of the engagement renewed by the  
 king don Carlos; and who could think of breaking  
 through a custom so solemnly sanctioned? Yet the Nea-  
 politan agent continued inflexible; he deposited the an-  
 nual tribute in a public bank, as he had done in 1788:  
 the *fiscal* renewed his protest; and the agent refused to  
 receive it.

After a few days, the Neapolitan agent sent a paquet  
 from his court to the prelate Federici, one of those sub-  
 ordinate characters who have acquired the confidence of  
 their employer and who often abuse it. Federici, who  
 temporarily supplied the place of the secretary of state,  
 was more irritable than the pope himself, or had less com-  
 mand of his temper. He refused to receive the paquet:  
 it was sent to him a second time; and a second time he  
 refused to accept it. Pius was not informed of this re-  
 peated breach of civility until the mischief was irrepara-  
 ble: the intelligence wounded him to the soul. “Per-  
 “ haps he had been made to reject a proposal of accommo-  
 “ dation! perhaps that paquet contained king Ferdi-  
 “ nand’s answer to his memorial!”—Cardinal Spinelli,  
 who, since the death of Orsini, was protector of the  
 crown of Naples at the court of Rome, happened at this  
 time to be at Naples. That prelate possessed a good heart,  
 pure intentions, a native fund of sound sense, and refined  
 penetration; nor could Pius have chosen a fitter person  
 to be his interpreter. Accordingly he commissioned  
 Spinelli to exculpate him from the involuntary offence,  
 which was imputable to Federici alone. But the court of  
 Naples, considering itself as superior to the affront, was  
 equally regardless of the apology: it quietly advanced  
 in its predetermined career, and spared none either of  
 the

\* With the presentation of a white palfrey decently caparisoned, by the  
 king himself or by his special ambassador vested with the regal character, not  
 to any of the pope’s ministers or to the Apostolic Chamber, but to the Roman  
 pontiff in person, publicly, and with the usual solemnities, and as an acknowledg-  
 ment of the *aforesaid* sovereignty.

the spiritual or temporal usurpations of the court of Rome.

The duchy of Castro and Ronciglione, lying within the territory that was called Saint Peter's Patrimony, had formerly belonged to the Farnese family, and had, under some frivolous pretext, been confiscated by the Apostolic Chamber. The king of Naples, who, as heir of the house of Farnese, continued to bear the title of that duchy, determined at this period to recover the property of his ancestors. This was a new source of uneasiness to the pope in that memorable year 1789, when the national assembly of France began to give the signal for those mortal wounds which were to be inflicted on the papacy. The other catholic governments foresaw the approaching evil: they saw with secret sorrow that the boldness of reform would overstep the bounds which they had wished to reach, and that the philosophic audacity of the French nation threatened the very existence of that spiritual authority which it might be the interest of the temporal sovereigns to modify, but not totally to overthrow. However powerful a monarch may feel himself by his own strength, in critical moments he wishes to save his auxiliaries: those governments, therefore, were seen to suspend their hostilities against the pontificate, without however making any retrograde motion. Such was the conduct of the Neapolitan court in the year 1789: it did not surrender its conquests; but it forbore to add to their number.

In the month of July 1789, the king of Naples at length replied to Pius's long memorial in a respectful and affectionate style which announced a desire of accommodation. But, with regard to the presentation of the palfrey, he explained himself in a manner which forbade the pontiff to entertain any further hope on the subject. He reverted to the times of the usurpations and hostile invasions of Innocent IV. and Alexander IV., "days of violence," he said, "which ought never to be remembered without horror. And although he himself (Ferdinand) had still permitted the presentation of the palfrey, he had not formed any engagement to have that ceremony accompanied by a numerous cavalcade, a solemn embassy, the roar of artillery, and all the pomp of a triumphal exhibition. Such solemnity was purely voluntary on

"his

“ his part : it was equally unbecoming his dignity as un-  
 “ conformable to the holiness and humility professed by  
 “ the visible head of God’s church. His resolution was  
 “ taken ; nor could any consideration induce him to alter  
 “ it.”

The pope accordingly perceived that the decree was irrevocable : the puerile homage of the palfrey, so flattering to his vanity, was irrecoverably lost ; and from his pontificate would henceforward be dated the disgrace of the tiara. He was on the eve of suffering much more severe losses ; but none of them more painfully affected him than this. Perhaps at this moment he continues to deplore it within the recesses of his Carthusian retirement at Florence.

During these transactions the marquis Caraccioli died ; an event which opened a new source of alarms for Pius. In his relations with the Neapolitan court, all the marks of condescension had proceeded from that minister, the measures of violence from the chevalier Acton, and the acts of inconsiderate caprice from the queen. Henceforward therefore he had no room to expect the delicacy of tenderness in the treatment he was to experience.

But in this idea he was mistaken. In proportion as the French revolution, which threatened to prove so fatal to him, was gradually developed, the other governments became less enterprising. That of Naples, without abandoning its pretensions to Benevento, to the duchy of Castro and Ronciglione, and to the independence of its crown, settled by compromise certain difficulties relating to discipline. At the conclusion of the year 1789 the negotiations were resumed ; and the following year produced an accommodation by which the pope renounced only what he had no hope of recovering. It was agreed that each king of Naples should, on his accession to the throne, pay five hundred thousand ducats as a pious offering to Saint Peter ; that the pope should nominate to all the lesser benefices, but that his choice should be confined to the king’s subjects ; that, for the episcopal sees, he should elect one of three candidates presented to him ; that application should be made to him for dispensations and matrimonial affairs, but that he should be obliged to confirm

confirm all the dispensations already granted by the bishops; that the presentation of the palfrey should be *for ever abolished*, and that the king of Naples should cease to be called a *vassal of the Holy See*.

This reconciliation was followed by a visit of the king and queen of Naples to the pope during Passion-week of the year 1791. Pius lavished on them all his most affecting suavity of manner, his most sumptuous display of courtly parade. He exhibited to them the superb and ever-novel spectacle of the *girandole* fire-work played off from the castle of Saint Angelo, and the illumination of the cupola and colonnade of Saint Peter's church. He visited them at the Farnese palace, which belonged to their family. He offered them a present of eatables which they refused, and another of mosaics which they accepted with pleasure. To gratify them, the ceremony of the anniversary of Pius's coronation was celebrated two days before its stated time. They made their appearance at the principal assemblies in Rome—in the palace of prince Doria, in that of the constable Colonna, at the Villa Borgheze. They in some measure became reconciled with those Romans to whom they and their subjects had testified an inveterate antipathy—an antipathy which they nourished with food raked even from the annals of ancient Rome. It is a known fact that the kings of Naples, to indulge their rancor against those Romans their detested neighbours, had placed, over the gates of the castle of Caserte, representations of historic events calculated to tarnish the glory of their ancestors, such as the capture of Rome by Brennus, the subjugation at the Furcæ Caudinæ, &c. But this stay which the Neapolitan monarch and his consort made at Rome, the reception which they experienced there, and the cordial conferences that took place between them and the pope, considerably softened the asperity of mutual prepossessions.

From that epoch indeed every circumstance tended to effect an approximation between the Roman pontiff and those of the European powers that stood in opposition to France. At first Pius lent them his spiritual aid—with what success, is universally known: at length, to his great misfortune, he determined to add also the assistance  
of

of his temporal arms. After having long fought against those powers for his own interests, he was ruined in fighting under the same banners with them in support of the common cause.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

*Pius's Relations with different Powers of Europe—with the United States of America—with Poland—the King of Sweden—the Republic of Venice—Portugal—the Dukes of Modena, Parma, &c.*

**I**F Pius has, by some of his faults, merited a part of his misfortunes, it must be owned that he governed the church at a period when the greatest talents and the greatest virtues would have been unable to screen it from the storms by which it was assailed. After the persevering efforts of half a century, philosophy had made a progress which was truly alarming to every kind of authority. She could not fail to make converts of those men whom their education had predisposed to receive her lessons, of the wordly throng whose passions she left in many respects unrestrained, and whom she emancipated from the troublesome yoke of conscientious scruple. Had she confined herself within these bounds, she would not have proved a dangerous foe to that class of men who turned to lucrative account those prejudices which she combated. But she had successively lowered

lowered herself to the level of the most vulgar understandings: she had penetrated even into seminaries and cloisters: in every country she had gained some proselytes around the throne; and, in some, she had even seated herself upon it. Such was the enemy that Pius had to combat at the commencement and during the whole continuance of his pontificate. On every side he suffered her attacks. We have already seen what he had been obliged to endure from the emperor, from the emperor's brother the grand-duke, from the government of Naples, and even from the ecclesiastic electors. Spain, whose sceptre had during two successive reigns been swayed by religious princes, and from which to the last moment he received so many marks of deference—even Spain did not forbear to give him uneasiness. The irreconcilable hatred of the court of Madrid to the Jesuits, its urgent importunity for the canonisation of the venerable Palafox, its maxims of government very nearly approaching to the liberties of the Gallican church, constantly stood in opposition to the dearest affections of the pontiff, and to his most deeply rooted prejudices. Formerly the Holy See had been a kind of sacred citadel which kept the nations in awe, commanded even their sovereigns, and menaced them with its formidable thunders. In latter times, the reverse had taken place; and it was now become as it were the butt against which were directed all the batteries of the temporal authority. Their artillery allowed not a moment's repose to the besieged, who each day saw tumbling in ruin some part of those ramparts which they had been accustomed to consider as inexpugnable. Heretics, schismatics, catholics of every shade and gradation, bishops, even devotees, seemed all to have formed a general league as against a common enemy. Its able auxiliaries, the Jesuits, formerly scattered in all parts of the universe, were now almost all collected around it: but, far from adding to its strength, they increased its dangers by governing it according to the rules of an antiquated system of tactics, of which every manœuvre was watched and defeated.

Almost all the temporal powers seemed to have formed the plan, if not of utterly denying, at least of considerably abridging, the spiritual jurisdiction of the court of Rome :  
and



and it were no difficult task to enumerate the few exceptions to this rule which some of their number have furnished. But it will be matter of no small surprise to find one of those exceptions beyond the ocean, in a nation young indeed in the date of her political existence, but already old in wisdom—faithfully observant of the principles of universal toleration which formed one of the chief of her fundamental laws—acknowledging no paramount mode of worship, but affording protection to all religions whose professors had taken refuge within her territories. During two centuries North America had been the asylum of a considerable number of catholics whom persecution had driven from different countries. So long as those refugees had, together with their adoptive countrymen, continued subject to the oppressive yoke of England, their civil existence had been equivocal and precarious. At length breathing under a regular and protecting government, they determined to secure the exercise of their mode of worship by the nomination of a bishop. The congress, although for the most part consisting of philosophers and protestants, did not scruple to act as their interpreter in applying to the court of Rome\*. In 1789 they asked of the pontiff a bishop for the catholics of North America, leaving to the Holy See the perpetual right of nomination. Pius, who was not accustomed to such deference even from the catholic powers, accepted the offer, but did not make an improper use of it. He left to the members of the catholic clergy the task of nominating their bishop in this first instance, only reserving to himself the privilege of confirming their choice. The person whom they elevated to the episcopal chair was John Carroll, who fixed his see at Baltimore, and assumed the title of pope's legate.

The authority of the pontiff was thus making some distant acquisitions, while his losses were accumulated close

\* That pontifical vanity and policy should have magnified into a solemn act of congress some private application from a committee of catholics or from their clergy, is quite in character: but be it remembered that the congress have uniformly abstained from all interference in matters of religion.

close around him : and to modern Rome might have been applied what Racine said of the ancient—

“ O Rome ! thy bitt'rest foes stand at thy gates.”

Accordingly, while the emperor, the grand-duke of Tuscany, and the king of Naples, seemed to conspire against the papacy, it received some consolations, some indemnifications from certain states of the North. Have we not seen the great Frederic testify a regard for the pontiff ; Catherine II. likewise, notwithstanding the vexations caused to Pius by her agents, pay a sort of homage to his spiritual authority ? But it was more particularly from Poland that he more than once received flattering marks of deference.

In 1775, it had been remarked in this last-mentioned country that the number of holidays was too great.—Application was made to the pope, who suppressed thirty.—Several members of the confederation of Bar had leagued themselves by oath against king Stanislaus ; and when they afterward wished for a reconciliation with him they asked and obtained of Pius an absolution from their oath. The whole nation, however, were not equally well disposed toward the court of Rome ; and many of the Poles were heard to express their wishes that their country might be emancipated from those spiritual trammels which retarded its progress in prosperity. In 1778 appeared the plan of a code, digested by the illustrious Zamoïski, proposing to abridge the jurisdiction of the pope's nuncio and the immunities of the clergy—to abolish the practice of appeals to the court of Rome—to subject all its bulls to the king's approbation—to establish a rule that monastic vows could not be pronounced except by persons of mature age, &c. But the hour was not yet come when the torch of reason should be permitted to dispel the clouds of superstition from the Polish sky : the clergy of that kingdom arose in opposition to these innovations : the pontiff bitterly censured them ; and the diet of 1780, in which the individuals who would have been affected by them possessed a predominancy, rejected the plan of the intended code. Its author went to seek an asylum in a happier land, where philosophy was not a crime ;  
he

he found protection under the wing of Joseph II. Pius did not, during the whole course of his pontificate, gain a more complete triumph.

King Stanislaus, enlightened as he was, procured for the pope some other successes ; feeling probably that the church afforded a support to his limited and tottering authority. In 1779, wishing to suppress a chapter of canons, which was equally useless as so many others of the kind, he applied to the pope for permission. A congregation of cardinals examined this momentous question, decided it in the negative, and Stanislaus submitted to their decision.

In 1782, several marks of insanity, which had been displayed by the too-famous bishop of Cracow, having induced his chapter to cause him to be confined, and this measure having been approved by the diet, Stanislaus thought proper to disarm the pope's resentment which might have been excited by this supposed invasion of his spiritual authority, and for that purpose sent to him a plenipotentiary to justify the Polish government. Finally, whoever recollects the conciliatory part which Stanislaus took in the thorny business respecting the archbishop of Mohilow, must acknowledge that no sovereign among Pius's contemporaries took greater pains than he to seek opportunities of alleviating the pontiff's distresses.

Another northern potentate, whom difference of religion as well as the distance of his dominions might naturally have precluded from almost all connexion with the pope—Gustavus III., who sought to distinguish himself by every species of singularity, seemed to affect showing marks of regard for the head of a church to which he did not himself belong. In 1781 he published an edict favourable to the catholics of his kingdom, and on this occasion signified to Pius that “ the style of the edict ” was adapted to the conceptions of the Swedish nation, “ but that the statutes were conformable to the spirit of “ the mildest toleration.”

Two years after this, he personally paid homage to the pontiff whom he had courted from such a distance. Setting out from Sweden under the title of the Count de Haga, he arrived on the second of November at Pisa, where

where at this time the grand-duke resided. Thence he wrote to the pope a most affectionate letter, announcing his speedy arrival at Rome, and assuring him that the catholics in his states enjoyed and ever should continue to enjoy his peculiar protection. Piranesi, his agent at Rome, experienced a very cordial reception on delivering that letter to the pontiff. A northern monarch, a heretical prince, coming to visit his holiness, and loading him with civilities, while so many catholic princes compelled him to swallow deep draughts from the bitter cup of insult and indignity! such an event at once afforded a feast to his self-love, and pour the balm of consolation into his wounded bosom. Immediately he dispatched a courier who was ordered to meet the royal traveller on the frontier of the Ecclesiastical State, and accompany him to Rome. On a former occasion we mentioned that this courier was deceived by the emperor, who passed himself for the count de Haga, and entered Rome under that title. The illusion continued until the moment when the pope and the emperor appeared in each other's presence. Pius affected to feel only an agreeable surprise on discovering his error; though his bosom harboured an inward vexation, which he exerted his utmost power to conceal. This unexpected though promised visit undoubtedly flattered his vanity: but at the same time it revived unpleasant recollections, and was perhaps an omen that boded new storms. He had nought but homage to expect from the king of Sweden: with the inflexible Joseph he was to have connexions of a different kind; and the latter enjoyed with malicious pleasure the ill-dissembled embarrassment of the pontiff, who, he plainly saw, would by far have preferred the presence of the stray son to that of the rebel.

The real count de Haga closely followed him who had surreptitiously usurped his name. On the morrow of his arrival he assisted at divine service celebrated in Saint Peter's church by the pope himself, who profusely lavished on him every token of affection. His affable demeanour immediately gained for him the good will of the Romans. He neglected none of those winning arts of conciliation which were so familiar to him; and he dextrously accommodated them in just proportion

tion to places and persons. Cardinal Antonelli having, as chief of the *propaganda*, testified to him his gratitude for the kind indulgence which he granted to the catholics in his dominions, "If God," replied he with a hypocritic countenance, "prolong my life and health, I hope to do much more in their favour."—With zealous eagerness he visited all the curiosities of Rome, and every where left in the minds of those with whom he conversed an advantageous idea of his understanding; his taste for the fine arts, and his refined politeness. He particularly testified an earnest desire to see that famous museum on which he knew that Pius set a great value. The king and the pontiff there met as it were by chance: their meeting powerfully excited the curiosity of the spectators; and even the slightest particulars of what took place on the occasion were minutely observed and carefully treasured in remembrance.

A French painter made this interview the subject of a picture which was highly applauded by the voice of flattery: but it was not, as Gorani intimates, the first or the only piece on the subject. That author appears to be further mistaken when he asserts that this meeting was an accommodatory medium adopted to avoid the embarrassment of regulating the ceremonial of etiquette between a protestant monarch and the head of the Roman church. There could exist no question of ceremonial with respect to Gustavus, since he did not travel in the character of a king, and had announced his wish to remain most profoundly incognito at Rome. Nay too literal an interpretation was given to that desire dictated by his feigned modesty, in sparing him the fatiguing homage of public entertainments, and the wearisome pomp of state dinners. The count de Haga, however, would have been pleased to see people occasionally recollect the king of Sweden: and he had the littleness to complain of the omission to the cardinal de Bernis in a tone of affected gaiety, of which that keen quick-sighted courtier did not fail to understand the real meaning. The academy of the Arcadians alone gave him a reception calculated to remind

him of his royal rank. The pope, however, did not omit any of those testimonies of affectionate regard which ought to have been more pleasing to him than acts of ostentatious homage.

After a few months' stay at Rome, he departed for Naples, taking his route through the Pontine marshes. He admired the works there, and bestowed the most pompous eulogiums on them after his return; for, from the castle of Caserte, where he spent six weeks, he went back to Rome in time to assist at the religious solemnities of Passion-week. Never before had they been celebrated with greater brilliancy than on this occasion. The great number of distinguished foreigners who then happened to be at Rome served further to enhance their pompous splendor. Gustavus, who had set out with a resolution of admiring every thing, was struck by the majesty with which the pontiff gave his benediction to the people on Holy Thursday and Easter-day: and, to sustain with uniformity his assumed character of protector of the catholics, he declared aloud that the protestants were to blame for condemning the pomp of those ceremonies; and that, since religion was necessary, it was right to clothe it with every external decoration which could render it august and impressive. He seemed at this moment to have forgotten that religion is more respected in those countries where it appears in the most simple garb. He testified a curiosity for every thing connected with the catholic mode of worship; and the pope showed great alacrity in gratifying him. He caused him to assist at the admission of a novice, in the convent of capuchin nuns: he even granted him the privilege—so difficult to be obtained—of entering the interior recesses of a nunnery: it remained accessible to him at all hours of the day; but Gustavus made a moderate use of that permission.

He determined to treat the Romans with a spectacle quite novel to them, and which put their toleration to the test in a singular manner. A Swedish bishop, the baron Taube, his chief almoner, came from the remote regions of Sweden to perform for him the functions of his ministry. Perhaps Gustavus was afraid lest his subjects should think him perverted by the society of the Roman idolaters, and wished to show himself faithful to the protestant

testant mode of worship even in the centre of catholicism. He caused a chapel to be fitted up in his palace : the chief almoner pronounced in it a discourse to prepare his flock for communion : on the morrow, at the conclusion of a pathetic sermon, he celebrated divine service according to the rite of the confession of Augsburg ; and the king, accompanied by his Swedish attendants and some foreign Lutherans, received the sacrament, while a crowd of Romans, who more strongly felt the impulse of curiosity than of fanaticism, stood assembled at the gate of his palace and in the adjacent streets, without expressing any other emotions than those of astonishment.

On this occasion Pius exhibited a proof of his tolerance which gave offence to none but bigots. It would have been difficult for a pope to have shown himself more of a philosopher.

During this second residence at Rome, Gustavus had the satisfaction to find that his pretended desire of remaining incognito was somewhat less indulged. When he went on a visit to the college of the *propaganda*, which is destined to shed the light of the catholic faith over all parts of the globe, and of course maintains connexions with all the nations which dwell on its surface, Gustavus received from its members a compliment which he might in vain have expected any where else : he was presented with his own eulogium in verse, written in forty-six different languages. His surprise was lively, and expressed in a lively manner.

It was recollected, somewhat too late, that the grand- duke and duchess of Russia, though travelling like him under modest titles, had consented that the dome of Saint Peter's cathedral should be illuminated in compliment to them. Why then was a less brilliant reception given to the king of Sweden ? The cardinal de Bernis and the chevalier Azara spoke on the subject to the pontiff. Some persons of inferior grade objected on account of the expense to be incurred by that magnificent spectacle ; and the circumstances of the papacy were such at this period, as did not warrant a disregard to the suggestions of prudential œconomy. But Pius delighted above all things, in the pompous show of exhibitions ; and he wished to leave an advantageous impression of his own behaviour  
on

on the mind of Gustavus. Accordingly the dome of Saint Peter's was illuminated. This happened at the termination of the Swedish monarch's second residence at Rome. Previous to his departure, the royal traveller made to the pope a present of three boxes of Brasil wood, which were accepted with a pleasure bordering upon enthusiasm; for such was Pius's usual manner of receiving whatever was calculated to add to the embellishment of his museum. Those three boxes contained two hundred and twenty-two medals, of which eighty-nine were of gold, and the remaining hundred and thirty-three of silver. They were a collection of the effigies of all the Swedish kings who had distinguished themselves in any department whatever.

It was not without sensations of regret that Pius saw Gustavus depart; and the pontiff and the king tenderly embraced each other at the moment of separation. The former had been sincere in the testimonies of his affection: for, as Joseph II. had several times observed, he was, "at bottom, a good kind of man." Gustavus had only acted an assumed character; but he had played his part well; for he was an excellent actor.

While the pope received such pleasing treatment from a prince on whom he had no claims, he stood exposed to the persecutions, frequently indeed deserved, of those governments from which he had a right to look for some respect at least. The Venetians, in particular, were very troublesome neighbours to him as a temporal sovereign, and, as father of the faithful, very indocile sons.

No nation of Italy, however, had greater reason to be satisfied with the relations by which it was linked to the court of Rome. In the course of three centuries and half, five Venetians had occupied the chair of Saint Peter: the most eminent dignities of the church had been profusely lavished on natives of their republic; yet it had been involved in unceasing broils with the popes. Benedict XIV., who was not a man of resentful temper, entertained against the Venetians an incurable aversion: even the benevolent Ganganelli was never able to succeed in conciliating their friendship; and Pius VI., who seemed predestined to experience every kind of trouble



ble and opposition, had, in the very first year of his pontificate, reason to complain of their conduct toward him. A great number of abbeys and prebends were under the protection of their nobles. Suddenly the senate secularised those ecclesiastical foundations, and decreed the incorporation of their possessions with those of the nobility.

This was the first signal of a quarrel which an event of strange fatality could alone have terminated—that is, to say, the overthrow of both governments. Pius, whose authority at this time was yet unimpaired, assumed a menacing tone, and said to the Venetian ambassador, “ Unless the senate revoke their decree, I will not acknowledge the new patriarch of Venice. It is time that your republic declare whether it choose to remain in Saint Peter’s bark, or to quit it.” He could not then foresee, that, within the period of his own existence, Saint Peter’s bark and the Venetian bucentoro\* should both be dashed to pieces against the same rock. The ambassador opposed threat to threat: “ Were it so,” said he, “ I would soon quit Rome, and your nuncio should be sent back to you.”—“ It is of little consequence to me,” replied the pontiff, “ to have at my court the ambassador of a state which shows so little respect for the Holy See, while I elevate its subjects to the highest dignities of the church.”

In the following year the animosities were increased to such a degree that Pius, desirous of emulating the warlike exploits of one of his predecessors, the impetuous Rovere†, seriously talked of declaring war against the republic of Venice. But the two cardinals of the name of Rezzonico, who were themselves Venetians, interposed: the pope calmed his passion, and submitted the examination of his cause to five of the most enlightened cardinals. Of their number Castelli alone spoke the accents of peace: the other four maintained that the patriarch ought not to be confirmed unless the senate redressed the grievances of the Holy See. But the senate, who had interested in their favour the courts of Vienna and Naples, answered in

\* The Doge’s state vessel. † Julius II. who occupied the pontifical throne from October 31, 1503, to February 21, 1513.

in the haughty language of disdain, and showed themselves disposed to break off the negotiation.

The pontiff, whose fits of courage were not of long duration, soon came to terms, and proclaimed the patriarch in the Consistory. In return for this concession, he thought himself entitled to require that all edicts militating against the jurisdiction of the Holy See should be revoked. But the senate, far from being moved according to his hope, suppressed at discretion every convent which they thought useless: nor had Pius any other consolation than that of learning that the Venetian commonalty loudly murmured against that assembly, which suffered itself to be guided by the impetuous ardor of the younger senators. But of what consequence was the commonalty at Venice? The senate, regardless of its murmurs, continued to pursue their reformatory plan, and, after the example of several other sovereigns, limited the age for taking vows, diminished the number of convents, and set bounds to their invasive covetousness. Like the cat in the fable, they enjoyed a double pleasure from these innovations—they were promoting the interests of their own state, and at the same time mortifying the pope, who too late perceived, that, in this universal conspiracy against his authority, there was no enemy whom he was authorised to disregard as unworthy of notice.

An incident of a purely temporal nature, which occurred in 1780, furnished a new cause of disturbance in addition to the many which already existed. The Fararesse territory, it is well known, bordered on that of Venice. Near Rovigo, a river which formed the boundary, often overflowed. The Venetian senate determined on the erection of a dike to check its ravages. This salutary measure excited the ill-humour of the court of Rome; and a body of troops was sent against the workmen, of whom six were killed in making opposition to the military force. The senate demanded a signal satisfaction, threatening, in case of refusal, to obtain it by force. On this occasion Pius suffered himself to be intimidated: he threw the blame of that transaction from his own shoulders on those of his legate, who in his turn exonerated himself by producing the order which he had received

received from cardinal Pallavicini. But the Venetian senate, confident of being supported by the courts of Vienna and Versailles, had already sent troops to the scene of action ; and nought remained for the pope but to yield. His soldiers, who were accused of having exceeded their orders, received punishment, and the works of the dike were resumed. The liminary stream was effectually coerced from ever again overflowing: but the resentment of the senate, not so easily restrained, continued to burst forth on every occasion.

The republic of Venice had in Dalmatia a number of subjects professing the Greek faith, and still continuing in separation from the church of Rome. It had ever acted toward them with toleration: to treat them with favour was a sure mode of mortifying the court of Rome; and the Venetian senate eagerly seized the opportunity. In 1782 they invited to Venice an archbishop of the Greek sect, and gave him a church for the celebration of divine service according to his own liturgy. The pope immediately exclaimed against the scandal, and hurled his spiritual thunders against the church that was thus profaned. The Venetians laughed at the holy father's wrath, though they condescended to enter into explanations for the purpose of proving how unreasonable it was. The result of the discussion proved that the existence of that Greek church was not an innovation, and that the only novelty in the whole affair was the solemnity with which the divine service had now been celebrated in it. The pontiff was obliged to submit: but his thoughtless impetuosity was not calculated to accelerate an accommodation. The senate caused a considerable diminution to be made of the sums which the Venetians were accustomed to pay to the court of Rome. The pope sighed at the loss, and it was natural that he should. The senate suppressed some rich monasteries, and applied their revenues to the endowment of hospitals that were destitute of resources. The pope sighed again: but did he deserve that any one should sympathise in his afflictions?

At length the French revolution, which even in its first stage wore an aspect highly formidable to princes and aristocratic governments and religious establishments, warned

warned the catholic sovereigns and states to conspire in one common cause: yet Rome and Venice still continued at variance. An arrangement concluded in 1749 seemed to have put a final period to the disputes respecting their boundaries on the banks of the Po. It secured to each of the two states the free navigation of that river, obviated on each side the ravages of its exundations, and prevented the insalubrity of both its banks. But the Romans infringed those wise regulations: they changed the course of the stream according to their own convenience, by opposing to it artificial obstructions: on the left shore bordering on the Venetian coast, they opened for it a new mouth, through which the mass of its waters flowed off and inundated the territory of the republic. The former mouth was stopped up: the navigation was injured in consequence: the accustomed approaches of the Po became dangerous and impracticable: foreign navigators complained, and shunned the spot. The senate of Venice had, in their turn, just cause of complaint, and demanded reparation.

The court of Rome had now recourse to her usual expedient, and, by a tedious and sophistical statement, laboured, to prove the goodness of her cause, and the innocence of her operations. The Venetian senate haughtily asserted the rights of their sovereignty—appealed to treaties—talked of compulsory measures—exculpated themselves to foreign nations by ascribing to the arbitrary proceedings of the papacy the impeded state of the navigation. Discussions took place; conferences were held; menaces were thrown out. But more momentous interests intervened to claim the attention of both governments and suspend their contest. The powers who have succeeded them, have inherited that quarrel: for concord did not preside at their first appearance on the theatre of Italy. Will the court of Vienna and the Cis-Alpine republic agree better respecting the mouths of the Po than the Venetian senate and the Roman government? At least it may safely be asserted that the two latter, in making their exit from the stage of political existence, did not mutually regret each other.

This double cause of disagreement existed only for some of the catholic powers: but there was not perhaps one

one of them, great or small, remote or proximate, which had not at the same period its disputes with the Holy See respecting ecclesiastic concerns. Even Portugal, which, of all the European nations, seemed the most servilely devoted to the papacy, occasionally added to the load of embarrassments under which Pius laboured. His pontificate was during two or three years contemporary with the ministry of the marquis de Pombal, that imperious minister, who, full of the spirit of the times, dared to attempt several philosophic innovations amid a people less illumined by the light of philosophy than any other nation in Europe. Scarcely had Pius taken his seat on Saint Peter's chair, when Pombal attempted to deprive him of the collation of all the benefices in Portugal. A compromise was however entered into: the king reserved to himself the annual sum of a hundred and twenty thousand crowns to be levied on the vacant church livings; and fifty thousand were granted to the pope for the maintenance of six hundred Portuguese Jesuits who had been banished to his dominions. The death of Joseph I., which was soon followed by the disgrace of the marquis de Pombal, delivered the court of Rome from a formidable antagonist.

Immediately the scene was changed. The queen had secretly sighed over the various wounds which the ex-minister had inflicted on the Holy See, and now halted to cure them. She kept up a regular correspondence with Pius—re-established his nuncio in the enjoyment of all the privileges of which he had been stripped—restored to liberty several fanatics who had suffered persecution under the despotism of the preceding ministry—restored several devotional institutions which it had abolished. The queen, good-natured, sincerely pious, but easily influenced, obeyed the suggestions of the marquis de Pombal's enemies. Superstition now began to re-appear with triumphant sway: the papacy, threatened with so many losses, received some consolations; and Portugal was about to replunge into the darkness from which it had begun to emerge.

In 1778 Pius obtained from the court of Lisbon a new *concordatum*, by which the collation of all the prebends was equally divided in thirds to the queen, the bishops, and

and himself. Soon after, the patriarchal see of Lisbon, which Pombal had deprived of almost all its honours, recovered its former splendor, its revenues, its numerous and opulent chapter. The partisans of the Jesuits were countenanced; and even an idea was for some time entertained that the Jesuits themselves were to be again taken into favour. Pius's enemies had industriously disseminated that report: the ministers of the courts of the house of Bourbon were alarmed by it; and the chevalier de Meneses, the Portuguese minister, was directed formally to contradict it. The only measure which the court of Lisbon thought proper at the moment to take in favour of the Jesuits and the See of Rome, was to grant moderate pensions to the former, and thus relieve the Apostolic Chamber from the burden of their maintenance, of which it had till that time borne almost the entire weight.

Thus passed six or seven years of the most perfect good understanding between the courts of Lisbon and of Rome. While all the other sovereigns, whether religious or not, were making ecclesiastic reforms, abridging the power of the clergy, and curtailing the revenues of the Holy See, the queen of Portugal alone continued to found convents, re-established the inquisition, and, obedient to the suggestions of her husband\* who was a zealous partisan of the defunct society, suffered an occasional ray of hope to cheer its proscribed and scattered members. All the other catholic powers, if they did not threaten a rupture with the Holy See, at least made no scruple of setting bounds to the sums which their subjects, whether of the clergy or the laity, paid to it as, the purchase of bulls for benefices, of dispensations, &c. The Portuguese alone, after the example of their sovereign, multiplied their demands for spiritual favours, of which they paid the price not only without murmur but with pious alacrity. In every other catholic country, the prelates whether opulent or otherwise, teised the *datario* with applications for a reduction of the tax on their bulls: but the *datario* experienced no such importunity from the beneficed clergy of Portugal, who, on the contrary, showed themselves the

\* Don Carlos.

the most devoted and most generous of the sons of the church. To solicit for any abatement of those dues, which they considered as so legitimate and sacred, would have appeared to them a sacrilege.

Some slight storms, however, disturbed the tranquillity of that so peaceful horizon. In spite of priestly opposition, some rays of philosophy burst through the gloom which sat brooding over Portugal. The prince of Brasil, less priest-ridden than his mother, had suffered himself to be *perverted* by the perusal of some foreign books. In 1787 he had the boldness to order Portuguese translations of the books of the normal schools of Vienna, and to introduce them into schools which he had himself established. Soon after, he caused certain positions, which were disagreeable to the Holy See, and which he had found in a journal printed at Berlin, to be sustained at the university of Coimbra—such as the following—“The sovereign may resume grants made to the church”—“He may, without impiety, tolerate every religion that is not incompatible with the safety of the state”—“He may expel the pope’s nuncios from his dominions, forbid his subjects to make application to the pontiff, and authorise bishops to grant dispensations”—“He deserves praise if he endeavour to emancipate his authority from the yoke of the Holy See, &c. &c.” These dogmata were novel in Portugal: at Lisbon they were heard with astonishment; at Rome, with mingled horror and indignation.

The young prince seemed determined not to confine himself to the bare theory of those bold principles of which he encouraged the propagation. He had succeeded in opening his mother’s eyes to a perception of the disorders prevalent in the monasteries of both sexes, and the shameful excess of opulence which they enjoyed. The queen, notwithstanding all her devotion, saw that a diminution of the number of monks would tend to promote the prosperity of her dominions; and accordingly, in 1788, she ordained that none of her subjects should thenceforward become a member of any religious order without the *royal sanction*. Some other measures of her government excited in the pope’s breast an apprehension

hention that she would become less obedient to his will.

About this period the prince of Brasil died. Entitled to regret on many accounts, he was lamented by the whole nation, the clergy excepted.

The impulse which he had given to the government of his country continued to operate for some time after his death. In 1790, her Most Faithful Majesty felt a touch of compassion for those classes of the people upon whom alone the weighty pressure of taxation fell: she ordained that all her subjects, not excepting the nobility or clergy, should equally bear the burden: and the pope who suffered so many losses for which his consent was not asked, thought it prudent to sanction by a brief this derogation from the immunities of the church. Encouraged by the success of this first measure, the queen proceeded to greater lengths. The archbishop of Braga possessed the prescriptive nomination to all the offices of magistracy belonging to his see: the queen insisted that he should renounce that right: the prelate appealed to the court of Rome: but the queen, without awaiting its decision, issued an edict suppressing not only the signorial rights of the archbishop, but likewise all the temporal jurisdictions of the clergy.

Thus, while the national assembly of France were inflicting the deepest wounds on the Roman church, her Most Faithful Majesty suffered herself to be hurried away by the torrent of example, and contributed her share toward embittering the cup of mortification for the pope. But she soon perceived the dangers to which the progress of French principles at once exposed both the altar and the throne: she suspended her reforms: she participated the wishes, and at length the exertions, of the other European powers who had conspired against the most formidable enemy of the Holy See.

The duke of Modena, too, proved himself at the same time a troublesome neighbour to the Holy See, as well as an unruly son. From his progenitors he had inherited pretensions to the duchy of Ferrara, which had been wrested from his family in 1598. He had made repeated efforts to enforce his claims, and even proceeded, in 1784, to some military preparations which alarmed

Pius's



Pius's fears : but the great catholic courts extended their protection over the pontiff's temporal power, as their quarrel lay only against the usurpations of his spiritual authority. The duke of Modena did not follow up his projects : but in the following year he executed one which his philosophy had long before planned ; he for ever abolished the inquisition within his little state, which had more than once been disturbed by the agents of that execrable tribunal ; and to the bishops alone he intrusted the care of watching over the purity of the faith.

Finally, even in Switzerland, of which the catholic portion had ever been reckoned among the most zealous supporters of the papal despotism, measures were adopted to prevent the usurpations of the nuncio at Lucern.

Amid this universal conspiracy of the catholic sovereigns against the Holy See, the duke of Parma was almost the only one who continued unconditionally enslaved to it. Educated by philosophers, he had stood constantly on his guard against their irreligious maxims : and on him was now devolved the task of atoning for the uneasiness which his state had given to the court of Rome under the pontificate of Clement XIII. —His excessive devotion consoled and encouraged the succeeding pontiffs. While all the other governments were employed in abolishing the inquisition, or at least restricting it within certain bounds, the duke of Parma, moved by divine inspiration, determined to re-establish it. This measure, he asserted in his edict, was dictated by " his paternal affection for his people, with the view " of screening them from the poison of heresy and " incredulity." He even promised to assist that tribunal with an armed force, if necessary. He next undertook its apology, which he addressed to the tribunal itself ; and vindicated it from the injustice with which it was condemned by its enemies : " although," said he, " the " holy office ever acts with moderation, and with all " that mildness which characterises the church, the " wickedness of the age paints it nevertheless in the " most odious colours." The inquisition required his encouragements by the most severe vigilance ; and the state of Parma, above every other in Europe, might claim

claim the honour of being the most fanatical and superstitious. Its prince surrounded himself, in his seat at Colorno, with sacred pictures and reliques which he had procured from Rome ; and, by so many merits, he was well entitled to rank as the most faithful son of the church. Hence he obtained from the Holy See a testimony of good-will, which he alone was capable of duly appreciating : he had long solicited permission for the priests in his state to celebrate three masses on Easter-day ; and that *signal favour* was granted as a reward of the pious zeal which had impelled him to re-establish the inquisition.

Such had, during sixteen years, been the relations, more or less hostile, of most of the European powers with the court of Rome. During that long interval, France—who had even during the dark ages marched at the head of all the governments that opposed the usurpations of the papacy—seemed to have concluded with it a truce for many years to come. But suddenly she started from her trance : and, being herself whirled along by a tide of the most imperious circumstances, she assailed and over-turned that ancient throne of which philosophy had on every side sapped the foundations.

But, before we enter on a description of that grand catastrophe, we think it necessary more particularly to explain what was, a short time before, the state of that Roman government, whose long duration ought more powerfully to excite our astonishment than its overthrow.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*State of the Roman Government, previous to the Period of its Overthrow.*

**I**N one of the preceding chapters we have noticed the chief part of the defects of the Roman government. They alone might, in any other country, have been sufficient to occasion its overthrow : but, among a people void of energy—engaged by superstitious exhibitions—visited by so many foreigners, of whom some diverted the Roman's attention from the consideration of his grievances, while others relieved his distress—under a mild climate where the wants of nature are few and easily supplied—placed in a political situation where each day produced fresh aliment for his curiosity, each year some new gratifications or at least some hopes to feed his ambition of whatever kind—under a government destitute indeed of force, but administered without tyranny—under a government, in short, over which, according to the notions of the vulgar, God himself and his apostles seemed immediately to preside—abuses which would have been the least tolerable in other countries and other circumstances, might have long supported themselves in peaceful impunity.

Toward the last years, however, which immediately preceded the French revolution, those abuses had risen to such a height, that even those observers who were

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the least disposed to gloomy anticipation prefaged serious calamities to the Holy See : such in particular was the moderate, the conciliating, and one might say the optimist, cardinal de Bernis.

The Roman government was guilty of culpable neglect especially in two particulars on which chiefly depends the prosperity of a state—morality and finance.

All classes in the state were tainted with immorality—not indeed that immorality of principle, that unblushing impudence of depravity, which publicly proclaims its infamy, and mocks at all scruple : on the contrary, vice, instead of wearing at Rome a disgusting appearance, cloked itself with all those disguises which could either palliate it or at least render it supportable. It sometimes adopted the language of virtue, and constantly wore the mask of devotion. There, as in almost every country where great importance is attached to religious ceremonies and where consequently they are brilliant and numerous, people thought they had performed their duty as good men and Christians, when they had acquitted themselves of their external obligations. The Romans, even those of the most enlightened class, combined the irregularities of vice with the practices of superstition. In a word, Rome was the true country of modern Pharaohs.

At their head marched the members of the Sacred College. These, almost to a man, essentially vicious from principle as well as inclination, saw in the catholic religion three objects very distinct, from each other—its *morality*, of which the maxims were constantly in their mouths, which they never observed except on occasions of publicity and when it required of them no great sacrifices, and which they boldly violated whenever they were sure of secrecy and impunity ;—its *dogmata*, which they professed in public with fanatic emphasis, but which they laughed at in private ;—its *discipline*, for the maintenance of which they would have set the universe in flames, provided they could themselves escape the ravages of the conflagration. To render their conduct a complete practical system of depravity, nought was wanting except scandalous notoriety : but, instead of that, hypo-

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cristy closed the black list. There now were no longer to be found any real Tartuffes \* except in one spot of Europe: that spot was Rome; and those Tartuffes were the cardinals, and the candidates for the cardinalian dignity. Of the three vows by which they were bound, they were faithful to the observance of only one—the vow of obedience; but it was that servile obedience which invites the hand of despotism, and affords a sufficient apology for its oppressions. Under a vain grimace of affected humility they concealed all the refinements and lofty pretensions of pride. With respect to the most difficult of all the Christian virtues, it is well known how they practised it: that sex which is called indiscreet was not the only one at whose mercy their secrets lay: and, in this particular at least, they bore a strong resemblance to those Cæsars whom they had succeeded.

This mixture of presumptuous ambition and feigned humility, of external decorum and internal corruption, of apparent superstition and secret incredulity, had stamped on all their Eminences a peculiar character by which it was impossible not to recognise them. Their words, their looks, their features, every thing about them was false. Habituated from their early age to dissimulation and distrust, they suspected each other, guessed at each other's thoughts, but never betrayed their own. Resembling in many particulars the *haruspices* † their predecessors, they differed from them in one, which was that they did not laugh on meeting each other. Hence the difficulty of defining a prince of the Roman church: hence the diversity of features under which they have been generally portrayed, and the diversity of characters under which they have been alternately seen to act.

Such models might well be expected to find imitators. Being the channels through which most favours flowed, the organs through which most applications were made, and all possessing a certain share of influence, it was natural

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\* *Tartuffe* is the name of an arch-hypocrite in one of Molière's plays.

† Soothsayers who pretended to foretell future events from an inspection of the entrails of victims.—Cato the Censor, who himself belonged to the board of augurs, said he was surprised that a *haurispex* could refrain from laughing whenever he saw one of his brethren. Cicero, de Divin. ii. 24.

tural that they should be surrounded by clients interested in pleasing them: and to please it was necessary to resemble them. Accordingly, by progressive degrees, all the Romans formed themselves after the example of the cardinals, with such differences only as a more or less refined education might be expected to place between them. In other countries the court take the *ton* from the sovereign: here the college of cardinals was the sovereign; and all Rome copied the pattern which they set. Among those copies, it is true, there were some hideous caricatures: the likeness extended in gradation even to the populace, who less adroit in the art of dissimulation, knew not how to indulge in depravity without giving scandal, and united superstitious credulity and unaffected fanaticism with the coarsest irregularities of vice, ran from the temple to the tavern, and passed from the adoration of a Madonna to debauchery and assassination.

All classes, all professions, were infected by the contagion of those corruptive principles: the only exceptions to the general rule were a few individuals of the great Roman families, who were peculiarly favoured by nature, some men of letters, and some artists—

Rari nantes in gurgite vasto.

It was now no longer by heretics alone that Rome was termed the modern Babylon: every thing there was venal: in civil affairs justice was administered with partiality: in those of a criminal nature, with an indolence which was mistaken for humanity. Crimes were neither watched, nor prevented, nor punished. The police was restless without vigilance: its vile agents, the *sbirri*, were a horde of spies and robbers, more likely to increase than prevent disorder in a moment of critical emergency. All the springs of the administration betrayed that want of tone and vigour which is the sure precursor of approaching dissolution. The government often showed obstinacy, but never true firmness; duplicity on all occasions—on none, genuine policy. Feebleness was conspicuous in all its measures; and the national want of spirit was discoverable even in the commission

sion of crimes. Composed of such elements, the Roman state must unavoidably have been, as experience has proved that it was, easy to be overturned, difficult to be again reared from its fall.

Notwithstanding so many defects, this government would have been or at least would have appeared supportable, if the finances and every thing connected with them had been better administered—if provisions had been more plenty and less dear. But even the first principles of political œconomy were unknown at Rome. Still, however, some improvement might have taken place if the modern Romans had imitated the conduct of their ancestors, who copied the wise institutions of their Tuscan neighbours. But they did not follow that example : they saw near their frontiers the state of Tuscany prospering under a system diametrically opposite to that which long custom had consecrated among them ; and they conducted themselves as if they thought that the promised immutability of the church were connected with that of their administration.

On a former occasion we have spoken of the Apostolic Chamber, and of its defective organisation. On it in great measure depended the finances ; and their ruined state bore testimony to its want of skill. The evil, it is true, might be traced back to the pontificate of Sixtus V. whose ambitious enterprises had begun to involve the chamber in debt. He had borrowed nearly ten millions of Roman crowns, of which he expended one half on aqueducts, obelisks, embellishments. The other moiety he had deposited in the castle of Saint Angelo, as a reserve appropriated to the purchase of corn in times of scarcity. He had at the same time endeavoured to establish a sinking-fund : but his plan was not followed ; and the public debt had increased under his successors. Some of them, however, had proved that the disorder might be remedied by a prudent œconomy. Clement XIV., for instance, had, in five years, saved above a million and half of French livres. But Pius, instead of treading in Clement's steps, displayed such stately pomp, and engaged in such expensive schemes, that the grievances of the people were accumulated and their

their menacing murmurs were heard even in the first years of his pontificate.

The Ecclesiastical State possessed none of those resources which can furnish prompt and efficacious remedies. Its commerce was almost entirely passive, except some exportations of wine and oil—that of corn when the harvest was good in the provinces washed by the Adriatic sea—that of wool and silk, which were almost entirely sent out of the country instead of being manufactured at home. Its industry, as we have already seen, was next to a nullity. The balance of trade was wholly to the disadvantage of the Romans, who must in a short time have been entirely exhausted of their specie, if the *datario* and the chancellery had not drawn back a part of it from the different catholic countries of Europe. But what these two offices received was not sufficient to save the treasury from debt ; since from them was derived a part of the cardinals' incomes, together with the salaries of that host of persons employed in expediting briefs and bulls. It was difficult to ascertain the total of those tributes, equally disgraceful to those who received as to those who paid them ; but there is reason to think that in 1788 the aggregate revenues of the *datario* and the chancellery still amounted to two millions four hundred and thirty-five thousand Roman crowns. Such nearly was the sum of specie which flowed into Rome to supply the place of that which was drained away by the numerous importations from foreign countries. Exclusive of this, the Apostolic Chamber received between fourteen and sixteen millions of livres arising from certain lands belonging to it, from the farming of certain taxes paid by the *communes* of the Ecclesiastical State, from the taxes on butchers' meat and on corn entering the city of Rome, from the produce of a lottery, and from the duties on the importation of foreign commodities. But from these revenues were to be deducted nearly five millions and half which were paid in interest by two public banks founded by the government ; and the expenses were so little proportioned to the receipts, that in 1787 the former exceeded the latter by near a million and half of French livres.

In any other state, such a deficiency would have been easily



easily supplied ; but the Roman government was as barren in contrivances as in resources. Its conduct was like that of old bachelors, who pay little regard to the interests of their heirs. In the papal territory were some very rich land-owners whom it was necessary to treat with delicacy, but very few capitalists. The great mass of the people possessed only precarious means of subsistence, and were supported either by their own labour, by the liberalities of travellers, or by alms from the monasteries. Could such a government have even the appearance of credit ? The only mode, therefore, by which it could provide for the excess of the expenditure, was the creation of paper-money—a ruinous mode, when the government which adopts it has no securities to offer, nor any fund for redemption—a mode, which in the end cannot fail to inflame the discontents of the people to the utmost. Accordingly the improper use made of it by Pius was the chief motive by which the Romans were disposed, if not to take an active part in destroying their existing government, at least to stand unconcerned spectators of its overthrow.

That paper-money however bore no interest. It consisted of bank-notes, which were called *cedole*, and which served for all payments above the sum of ten crowns. Even in the first years of Pius's pontificate, they were at a discount of five per cent. Workmen's wages had risen, provisions likewise were become dearer, in proportion to that loss ; and the evil became still worse in process of time. It was in great measure his work ; and that was the principal ground of the people's hatred to him ; for that is the species of oppression which they bear with the least patience.

There was nothing in the other branches of the administration which could reconcile the Romans to Pius. We have seen him constantly surrounded by obscure and fanatical advisers, and almost invariably shunning the counsels of his rigid friends. He did not repose his confidence in any of those who, by their situations or their talents, were entitled to it : and, without pronouncing too harsh a judgment on him, it may with truth be said that he neither knew how to govern nor suffer himself to be governed. To be convinced of the truth of this

this assertion, it is sufficient to take a view of his conduct toward the different cardinals who successively held the principal post of ministry under him—that of secretary of state.

Having been raised to the pontificate chiefly by the influence of the courts of Versailles and Madrid, he accepted from their hands, much rather than selected by his own choice, the cardinal Pallavicini, who had, to the last day, been his most formidable competitor. He kept on good terms with him because he was connected with the court of Spain by means of the duke de Grimaldi his cousin-german: but he never entertained for him either friendship or confidence. Pallavicini felt a secret propensity in favour of the Jesuits; and that was perhaps his only point of co-incidence with the pope. They were both obliged to conceal that propensity, and even to adopt measures which were ostensibly in opposition to it: but even here they were not always in accord. The cardinal, more calm and cautious, sought to avoid even the appearance of an offence to the catholic courts; while the pontiff, impetuous and obstinate, was more ready to commit errors than to repair them.

Thus they lived nearly ten years in a relation which was reciprocally disagreeable. More than once, Pallavicini, convinced of the insufficiency of his efforts to please the capricious pontiff, wished to retire from his station. But France and Spain were as well satisfied with him as his limited influence would allow: they were certain at least that he was incapable either of doing or advising mischief: their ministers therefore pressed him to continue in office; and he yielded to their persuasions. After having drunk deep of the cup of mortification and disgust, he languished for some time, and at length died on the 24th of February 1785. Bernis and Azara personally regretted him, because he was good-natured, compliant, and well-intentioned: yet they could not forbear saying to each other, “He has been useless to us, and we have caused his misfortune.”

It was chiefly on this account that they forbore to interfere in the choice of a person to succeed him. The public voice designated five candidates—the young cardinal

dinal Doria, who had been nuncio in France, and had there rendered himself an object of affection;—cardinal Garampi, who possessed gentleness of disposition and manner, and enlightened understanding, and erudition, but whose health was feeble, whose attachment to the Jesuits was much too notorious, and who, for that and some other reasons, would not have been agreeable to the court of Spain;—cardinal Zelada, of whom we have often already spoken, and whom we shall more than once again have occasion to mention;—cardinal Archetti, who had conducted himself with sufficient prudence during his nunciature in Poland, but whose talents did not rise above mediocrity, and who had a propensity to those petty Italian *finesses* which often prove more dangerous than useful, especially in such circumstances as those in which the papacy at that time stood. His chief merit was his connexion with cardinal Antonelli one of the most enlightened members of the Sacred College, who had removed from the minds of the French and Spanish courts the prejudices which they had conceived against him during the embassy of Monsieur Aubeterre, but in whom, nevertheless, they did not yet repose entire confidence.—The fifth candidate was the prelate Sylva, a man not destitute of talents, but who was not yet sufficiently known.

Of these five candidates, two alone, Doria and Archetti, fixed the attention of the pontiff, who for some time hesitated between them and the cardinal Buoncompagni. Respecting this delicate choice, he consulted Bernis, without whose approbation he was sensible that he ought not to determine; France being at that time the power with which it was most incumbent upon the Holy See to keep on good terms, and the prudence of cardinal de Bernis, the French minister, inspiring the pontiff with sincere esteem for him. Pius compared and discussed with him the advantages and disadvantages that would attend the election of each of the three cardinals whom he had in view. “I know,” said he to Bernis, “that the first would be agreeable to your court; but he is yet very young. He may have a knowledge of foreign affairs: but is he equally acquainted with those of the home department? Besides, I do not know whether  
“his

“his temper and mine would agree: and at my age I can no longer offer myself violence each moment by acts of virtue.” He then avowed that the cardinal Arhetti appeared to him the fittest man for the ministry, as well on account of his character as of his capacity; that, of all those who might be proposed, he would be the most agreeable to him; “but,” added his holiness, “he is not rich enough. He is, besides, a Venetian; and the conduct of his republic toward me has not been such as should induce me to afford it that gratification.” Hence it appears that Pius was capable of harbouring resentment, but that sometimes at least he was sincere.

At length he came to the third of those whom he had in contemplation—the cardinal Buoncompagni, whom he knew to be esteemed by the two ministers whose goodwill he wished to preserve, and of whom Joseph II. had conceived so favourable an idea during his last visit to Italy. Buoncompagni had long been legate at Bologna, where he displayed considerable talents and great firmness. In that mission however, he had made some malcontents. The Bolognese had a peculiar government of their own, which was a mixture of aristocracy and democracy; and they enjoyed several privileges, of which they were jealously tenacious. The legate had opposed the kind of independence in which they wished to maintain themselves with respect to the Holy See: he had laboured to humble their grandees, under pretence of restoring to the people their legitimate authority: but the people had of themselves perceived, or by the suggestions of others were taught to suspect, that this tender concern for their interests arose purely from his wish to substitute, in the Bolognese territory, the despotism of priests to that of the nobles.

These were grievances of which the remembrance was not obliterated by the real services which he had rendered to the country in draining part of its marshes and rendering them susceptible of cultivation. Even those very services were subjects of blame in the eyes of his censors, because the legate had not been able to undertake those useful works without increasing the debts of the province by some millions of crowns. It was even  
asserted

asserted that he had enriched himself during his legation ; and the Bolognese considered as the fruit of his extortions that wealth which he displayed among them in the indulgence of a scandalous luxury. Whether those reproaches were well or ill founded, it certainly cannot be denied that Buoncompagni had hitherto served the court of Rome with great zeal and success, and given proofs of an extraordinary capacity : and these constitute the strongest claims to the gratitude and esteem of a despotic sovereign.

But to Pius personally he appeared liable to very serious objections ; and the pope did not conceal them from the cardinal de Bernis, but told him that he was somewhat afraid of Buoncompagni's haughty unbending disposition, and that it must be a painful task to be obliged to conduct business with the minister of that character. He nevertheless intimated his readiness to sacrifice his personal feelings for the sake of making a choice which should be agreeable to the catholic sovereigns and useful to the Ecclesiastical State.

Although Bernis did not dissemble his attachment to cardinal Buoncompagni, to whom, since his return from Bologna, he had given strong testimonies of regard, he did not choose to force the will of the pontiff ; and his court, as well as that of Spain, determined that Pius should be left at perfect liberty to make his own choice. The ministers of those two courts would have been pleased, in case of Buoncompagni's exclusion, to see one of the four following cardinals elevated to the prime-ministry—Zelada, respecting whom their sentiments had never varied—Negroni, whom they had ten years before wished to raise to the papacy—Conti, who had ever been agreeable to the crowned heads on account both of his character and his principles—and Palotta, who, notwithstanding his blunt and almost rude manner, was universally considered as the most honest man in Rome, and one of the most enlightened. But they knew that none of the four was likely to prove acceptable to the pontiff, with whom they did not co-incide in principle.

Pius, uninfluenced by any external impulse, continued near four months in suspense respecting the choice of his  
secretary

secretary of state. Buoncompagni was of too haughty a temper to seek to fix the wavering mind of the pontiff, who, on the other hand, was not sorry to prolong the uncertainty. Meanwhile the management of business was intrusted to the ministry of subordinate agents who cautiously avoided to thwart his will. At length, after much deliberation, the esteem which he could not withhold from cardinal Buoncompagni, the desire of making a choice which should prove agreeable to France and Spain and especially to cardinal Bernis, and the need in which he stood of a firm and enlightened man to repress the mal-contents of Rome, prevailed over his repugnance; and before the expiration of June, he notified to the ministers of the court of Versailles, Madrid, and Vienna, that he had chosen the cardinal Buoncompagni for his secretary of state.

This new minister had, on his first entrance into office, some very critical affairs to conduct: that of the nuncios in Germany—the disputes between the Holy See and the court of Naples, which were then risen to their highest degree of warmth—the arrest of the cardinal de Rohan, of which we shall speak in another place—soon made him regret his legation at Bologna, where he had found a greater facility of acquiring fame and of doing good. Besides, it was not long before he saw a host of enemies arising against him. Of these, one who took the least pains to disguise his enmity was the pontiff's own nephew, who had for a considerable time been in expectation of the cardinal's hat, and had obtained it shortly after Buoncompagni's installation. On this occasion he received marks of affectionate regard from all the distinguished characters in Rome; and those testimonies of affection were at that time sincere; for he was universally beloved. About the same period his uncle appointed him secretary of the briefs, an office for life, which conferred on him great privileges.

Buoncompagni took the alarm on beholding so many favours conferred upon a man by whom he knew himself not to be viewed with the eyes of friendship. He saw moreover that the nephew was eager to trench upon his rights, and to form a counterpoise to his influence: whereupon he testified his uneasiness to the pontiff, who assured

assured him that he had his entire confidence—he meant, no doubt, all the confidence which he was capable of reposing in any man. Pius at first treated Buoncompagni with greater cordiality than had been expected; and the latter exerted sufficient command over his temper to prevent its being productive of any of those scenes which the pope himself had apprehended. This transient good understanding was chiefly attributable to the cares of the cardinal de Bernis, who himself thought it would be durable, and congratulated himself on it as his own work. He was pleased to see Pius consult his secretary of state, and—what was more wonderful—follow his advice. He imagined that a reformation had taken place in the pontiff's mind; and in the year 1787 he wrote to his court, “Pius begins to feel that statesmen are more necessary to him than theologists.”

The influence of Buoncompagni's temperate prudence was particularly discernible in the conduct of the Roman court at the period of the attempts made by the bishop of Pistoja. Pius concealed his vexation on beholding that prelate so formally wage war against the Holy See, and his joy on witnessing his defeat. During the ministry of Buoncompagni, the quarrel with the Neapolitan court continuing to acquire additional animosity, he thought that a personal interview would more powerfully operate to effect a reconciliation than the mediatory offices of the best-chosen agents. Accordingly he went to spend a month at Naples, where, though his presence did not produce all the effect which he had expected, at least he succeeded in preventing that explosion which any other person might perhaps have accelerated.

He justly appreciated the value of that frivolous tribute to which Pius's vanity annexed such consequence. He saw that bubble dissipated under his ministry, without feeling any other regret for the loss than what was occasioned by the mortification with which he saw Pius affected. Through his hands passed all the reclamations, demands, protests, and long memorials, by which the court of Rome hoped to bring that of Naples to a greater degree of deference for the Holy See. He had clearly foreseen how inefficacious all his means would prove toward accomplishing the desired object: but a circumstance still

still more unpleasing to himself personally, was that these discussions in which he was the organ, exposed him to the risque of incurring the ill-will of that court whose friendship he for powerful reasons wished to cultivate. His family possessed very considerable estates in the dominions of the Neapolitan monarch, and, among others, the principality of Piombino, which alone yielded an annual income of above two hundred thousand livres. His friends had long continued urging him to quit a post in which he did not enjoy a degree of authority sufficient to compensate the embarrassments in which it involved him, the dangers to which it exposed both himself and his relatives. For some time he resisted their solicitations.

Those who have had a closer acquaintance with cardinal Buoncompagni, judge him with less severity than Gorani has done. According to their description, he was a man of understanding and honour, who felt the ambition of an exalted soul—that of rendering service to his country at the same time that he laboured to acquire fame for himself. Notwithstanding some marks of affection from Pius, he soon discovered that it would be impossible for him to gain the pontiff's entire confidence, without which he never could accomplish that laudable object. It was refused to him in every thing which concerned the affairs of the home department. Toward the commencement of the year 1789, his family even excited his apprehensions lest, unknown to him, an accommodation should be negotiated between the pope and the court of Naples. His disgust became each day more visible; and it acquired additional strength from the appearance, at that period, of a work published in France, under the title of “Critical and impartial Reflexions on the Revenues and Contributions of the Clergy in France, or Extracts of Letters written in 1786 and 1787 to his Eminence the Cardinal Buoncompagni Ludovisi, by the Abbé de M. . . .” This publication was the prelude to an attack made in that same year on the French clergy. The cardinal was more than astonished to find himself presented to the public as concerned in discussing a question of a nature so delicate for the Holy See: and he protested that he had had no intercourse whatever with the author, whose



whose principles he was far from approving. It almost invariably happens that we only confirm suspicion by the warmth of our efforts to repel it. Thus it fared with the cardinal in this instance: his enemies interpreted his protestation in their own way, and congratulated themselves on the importance which it gave to the French abbé's publication, beyond what it had possessed even in France.

These various motives impelled Buoncompagni to form the resolution of retiring. He communicated his intention to his friends Bernis and Azara. "I am determined," said he, "to resign the ministry: but I will do it nobly, without uttering a complaint, and especially without asking any remuneration." Those two ministers laboured to dissuade him from his purpose: "he possessed," they said, "the public esteem, even that of the pope, if he did not enjoy his entire confidence: he was agreeable to the crowned heads; and in the crisis with which the Holy See was threatened, such a man as he was necessary. Besides, how could he dispose of himself in retirement? accustomed as he had been to business, he would feel himself overpowered by the burden of unemployed leisure."

For some time Buoncompagni yielded to the solicitations of his friends. The pontiff was no doubt informed of his intention, and of the dissatisfaction which had prompted it: he affected to testify a more than usual regard for him, and even conferred on him a favour of no ordinary kind by appointing one of his near relatives governor of the castle of Saint-Angelo, an office which was usually reserved for the pope's nephews. But Buoncompagni was a man whose resolutions were not easily shaken. He gained certain information that his interposition was eluded in the negotiation with the court of Naples: he entered into a warm explanation on the subject with the pontiff; he upbraided him with his mysterious secrecy, and with the confidence which he reposed in a certain Neapolitan prelate who had not the confidence of any body else.

Pius, not choosing to subject himself to the reproach of having caused the retirement of so valuable a man, and being awed by the energetic character of the cardinal, used dissimulation with him, and listened to his complaints with

with an appearance of interest : but Buoncompagni did not mistake the pontiff's real disposition, and now more strongly than ever felt the impropriety of continuing in the ministry.

Almost every year Pius paid a visit to the Pontine marshes. On the eve of his departure he saw cardinal Buoncompagni make his appearance : " It is time," said " the latter, " that I frankly enter into an explanation with your holiness. I accepted the ministry " which you offered to me, because I hoped, that, aided " by your confidence, I should be able to perform its " functions with honour. My expectation has been disappointed : my health is injured : my strength is no " longer adequate to the task which I have undertaken. " Obstacles of every kind concur in rendering it each " day more difficult to me. It is a duty which I owe " to your holiness, a duty also to myself, to resign a post " in which I cannot be serviceable."

Pius appeared astonished and even afflicted by his determination, which he combated with the tone of sincerity, with the accents of friendship. " No !" said he : " you shall not abandon me in the midst of the critical " circumstances in which I am placed. Come to me at " Terracina : we will there discuss the motives of your " resolution ; and I hope it will not be proof against my " arguments, and especially my solicitations."

Pius imagined he had shaken the cardinal's purpose ; but Buoncompagni was not hasty in forming his determinations ; and when once they were formed, it was difficult to make him alter them. On this occasion he had consulted nobody : and it was not till after the above explanation that he communicated the affair to Bernis and Azara, who now plainly perceived, from the step which he had taken, and from their knowledge of Pius's temper, that no hope of accommodation any longer remained. Another circumstance moreover contributed to increase the disgust of the cardinal secretary of state, and to render it invincible : that was the influence which the prelate Ruffo had acquired.

We have already explained the nature of his claims to the pontiff's good-will. Pius wished to repay to him the services

services which he had formerly received from the cardinal Ruffo his uncle. He promoted him to that office which affords the amplest scope for doing good or doing mischief—the post of treasurer to the Apostolic Chamber, from which he had removed the honest cardinal Palotta, to make room for a man who combined amenity of manner and brilliancy of talents with depravity of morals and insatiate avidity. Ruffo was callous to all scruple whenever there was question of gratifying the pope's wishes, and enriching his nephews. Thus it was that he had gained a preponderancy, to which every thing must yield, every thing in fact did yield, except the noble pride of the cardinal Buoncompagni, and the austerity and frankness of the Spanish minister, the chevalier Azara.

The latter, who was in the habit of telling the pope such bold truths, and of telling them often with success and ever with impunity, spared no pains to prevent that fatal ascendancy which the prelate Ruffo was daily acquiring. What motive could he have had to repress his zeal? He expected no favours from the pope; and he spoke in the name of one of those sovereigns whose friendship Pius felt himself the most interested in preserving. The Spaniard recollected that it was to him the pope's nephew was indebted for the title and dignity of a grandee of Spain: and Pius did not seem sufficiently to remember that service. Azara took advantage of all these circumstances to attack the various disorders which had, especially of late years, made an alarming progress. The pontiff listened to him with apparent deference, yet followed the suggestions of his flatterers. The chevalier Azara, at length convinced of the inefficacy of his remonstrances, tried during some time to forbear grating his holiness's ear with their unwelcome importunity.

Azara's coolness alarmed Pius, who could show sufficient suppleness of disposition whenever interest or fear rendered it necessary. The latter unbosomed his uneasiness to the cardinal de Bernis, who had kept himself at a distance since the time when he had seen that, in spite of his counsels, the court of Rome was hurrying on to its own destruction. But Bernis was of a temper to be easily brought back: he did not resist the flattering

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caresses of the pontiff : he exerted himself to dissipate the clouds which had arisen between him and the chevalier Azara. The pope, who well knew the influence which that minister enjoyed in the Spanish court, again turned to him, loaded him with civilities, and affected to seek his advice on occasions of difficulty. At this period he had formed the project of increasing the already scandalous opulence of the duke his nephew by making to him a cession of the duchy of Castro and Ronciglione. Azara had spoken his sentiments on the subject with his usual severity : and the pope dared not, for the present, venture to carry his design into execution.

But, in every other respect, the ascendancy of Ruffo was uncontrollable. Buoncompagni, whose intentions were upright and whose principles were those of a statesman, saw that it would be vain for him to struggle against such an antagonist ; and this was one of the chief motives which confirmed him in his resolution of retiring.

The gout, to which he was subject, prevented him from repairing to Terracina : and Pius, on his return from the pontine marshes, found him, as he had left him, determined on quitting the ministry ; a determination which no doubt gave the pontiff secret pleasure. He now saw that he ran no risque in renewing his solicitations, and therefore again entreated the cardinal not to abandon him. " You complain of your health," said he to him feelingly. " Well, then ! be attentive to it : take " all the time necessary to re-establish it. Go breathe " a purer air : try some salutary baths : I pledge you " my word that I will do nothing material in your absence without consulting you."

Accordingly Buoncompagni set out for the baths of Vicenza. He there remained some months, less employed in the re-establishment of his health than in the composition of a long memorial against his antagonist Ruffo. Reflexion, and retreat which is so favourable to it, only confirmed him in his resolution. Notwithstanding the hypocritical entreaties of the pontiff, he perceived that the impression, made on his holiness's mind by the explanation which had taken place between them, still continued and would long continue with unabated

abated force. In September 1789, he sent in to him his resignation, to which Pius replied in honorific terms that served as a cloke to palliate his spleen and vexation. The ex-secretary did not longer than ten months survive his disgrace ; for such was the light in which he considered his retirement, though on his part voluntary.

The breast of Buoncompagni panted with inordinate ambition. It has been asserted that chagrin hastened the period of his existence—an assertion which, if true, would prove in him a weakness of mind very far from compatible with what the world knows of him, with his uncommon energy of character, his robust constitution, and that imperturbable insensibility which is perhaps necessary in a statesman, but which his censurers have considered in him as a very grievous fault. Envy has not spared his memory : Gorani has attributed to him many defects, and even vices ; but those who have had a nearer view of his conduct judge him with less severity. He certainly did not possess either the humility, or especially the chastity, of a Christian. But the cardinal de Bernis and the chevalier Azara, who had better opportunities than Gorani of appreciating him, never thought that his talents were but superficial.

The period of his retirement was that when the Holy See was beginning to suffer the most formidable attacks from France. A minister of Buoncompagni's character, equally prudent as he, but enjoying greater authority, would then have been very necessary to the Roman pontiff. The Sacred College contained no cardinal of that temper : those who possessed any capacity, either were viewed with very suspicious eye by the catholic powers, or would have been unacceptable to the pope. The ministers of France and Spain again proposed the cardinal Zelada, whom they had invariably esteemed, and against whom Pius fostered no prepossession.

Zelada, as we have already seen, was adroit and insinuating. In peaceable times he might have been a fit person for the pontiff's choice : but his character, naturally void of energy, was moreover infeebled by age and infirmities. He was at this period seventy-two years old : he was himself sensible of his own insufficiency, and alleged it, in objection, to his two friends and even

to the pope : he yielded however to their sollicitations, but soon repented of his compliance. If he had confined himself to the same sphere in which he had hitherto moved, as the enlightened protector of the arts, librarian of the Vatican, director of the Pio-Clementine Museum, he would, in spite of the calumnies of his enemies, have continued to be the object of public esteem, the conspicuous Roman individual with whom foreigners of all classes were the most anxious to be acquainted, and with whose behaviour they had the greatest reason to be satisfied. But he yielded to the delusive suggestions of tardy ambition : his reputation suffered a partial eclipse when he attempted to sustain a character not suited to his cast : the man of letters, the man of science, the man of amiable disposition, was forgotten : the only light in which he was now viewed was that of an incompetent minister. Thus he exchanged his peaceful and easy enjoyments for the storms of the ministry, and for those chagrins which embittered his declining years. He suffered the preparatory steps to be taken for overthrowing, and even by his own injudicious measures accelerated the overthrow of, that government over which he had the vanity to preside. A witness of the first disasters of the Holy See, he possessed neither sufficient firmness nor sufficient skill to either prevent or alleviate them. He had the mortification of hearing them imputed to himself, and of finding none but censurers among his own countrymen, and implacable adversaries among the French, among that very nation which hitherto had never mentioned his name but in the language of encomium and admiration.

But his short and inglorious ministry is connected with the French revolution ; and, before we conclude this work, it is proper that, in recounting the misfortunes of which that event was productive to the Holy See, we complete the picture of Pius's pontificate by presenting a retrospective sketch of his connexions with France previous to that epoch which proved so fatal to him.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*Connexions between France and Pius VI. down to the Revolution in 1789.*

IT must ever be considered as a singular event in the history of the court of Rome, that the nation which effected at least its temporal destruction, was precisely that particular one among all the European nations of which it had before had the least reason to complain. While Spain, in her implacable animosity against the Jesuits, harassed Pius whenever he betrayed the slightest symptom of partiality to them, the court of France, it is true, co-operated with her as in a common cause: but it was easy to perceive that this was done rather through complaisance to an ally than from any sensation of personal uneasiness. The danger of the defunct society's intrigues, which appeared so imminent to Spain, made little impression on the ministry at Versailles. In France, Fanaticism had shrunk back in retrograde motion before the light beaming from the torch of Philosophy. Some members of the superior clergy occasionally endeavoured to aid the former in recovering her lost ground: but they experienced little support or countenance; and the decrees of public opinion superseded the necessity of any which the court might have issued. The pretensions of the priests, which

which at the commencement of the century had still continued to cause some alarms, were now treated with ridicule by the bulk of the nation, and no longer excited any uneasiness in the breast of government. The devotees alone viewed the clerical order with a sort of religious awe; but devoteeship was now confined to the obscure classes of the community, and its professors had ceased to be formidable. There were few enlightened or powerful men who really felt the devotional spirit; and those who did not had no interest in affecting it. Religion was therefore insensibly losing its sway; no more of it was preserved than what was necessary for the support of the royal authority. Its ministers, even those of most exalted grade, unscrupulously resigned themselves to the indulgence of all the worldly passions, and did not even take the trouble of assuming the mask of hypocrisy. There now hardly existed between the Gallic and the Roman courts any relations except those of habit and courtesy: and, as the former had no longer any thing to fear from the latter, neither did she seek to be feared by her. Accordingly we see, that, from the first year of Pius's pontificate until the year 1789, very few discussions of an intricate nature took place between France and Rome.

Will it be believed that one of the first objects which occupied the attention of the cardinal de Bernis under the new pontificate was the research to be made in France for the discovery of proofs to establish the saintship and attest the miracles of "the blessed queen Joan de Valois," first wife to Louis XII. and founder of the order of the Annunciation, who had been beatified by Benedict XIV. in the year 1743? Solicitations had long been made by the court of France for her canonisation: and it was a cardinal, once a courtly abbé, the voluptuous author of the "Four Parts of the Day," and an amiable philosopher, who did not disdain to be the agent in this momentous negotiation! But the business involved one of those chimeras on which were founded the splendor and power and opulence of the church; and, to promote such important interests, even the most enlightened and otherwise honest men made no scruple to render themselves the organs of imposture.

This



This was not the only disgraceful tie by which France was at that time connected with the court of Rome, and continued so connected until the memorable æra of the revolution. It is sufficiently known that the bishops, the abbots, the holders of those benefices which are termed *consistorial* because the nominations to them were proclaimed by the pope in a consistory of cardinals, were obliged to pay for the issuing of the bulls without which they could not take possession ;—that an office called the *datario*\* had the charge of issuing them ;—and that the fees which it required of the person promoted, were, by the *concordatum* of Francis the First, fixed at one year's income of the benefice. It is true, an abatement was most commonly obtained on the established price of the bulls : Clement XIV., naturally disinterested, had been very accommodating in compromises of that kind : but Pius, at the very outset, showed himself more rigid in his demands : and what will appear very strange, he really fancied himself bound in conscience to act with that strictness. Thus, by a most extraordinary subversion of the principles of that religion which in its very infancy had so formally forbidden simony, the heads of the catholic church had carried the prohibited practice to such extent that they at last became scrupulous of not being as simoniacal as it was possible : and the sage Bernis himself, when directed, on each change of benefices, to solicit a diminution of the amount of that scandalous tax, was not far from participating those scruples. He felt a sort of compassion for that *unfortunate* Roman treasury, which these re-iterated solicitations tended to impoverish : and he more than once wrote to Versailles, when desired to present a new petition, that it was “ begging alms of the “ poor.”

Bernis, however, was in some respects excusable. He possessed in the court of Rome a certain influence, of which he gave frequent proofs—an influence which, under the yoke of slavery that still pressed on us in many instances, he wished to reserve for objects of higher importance ;

\* The *datario* was rather the person at the head of the office in question.

portance ; and he was afraid of exhausting it by applications which official avidity could not receive otherwise than with repugnance. Besides—though we do not offer this as an additional argument in his justification—he was as cardinal-protector, personally interested in seeing that source of revenue secured from diminution. This requires some explanation.

Since so degrading an institution has been abolished, never more to appear, it is not a matter of indifference to learn by what sophisms covetousness compounded with pride in the catholic church.

The salaries of the cardinals-protectors had no connexion with those payments known by the name of *annates*, and sanctioned by the *concordatum*. The king did not allow them any pension from his treasury : but, as they were appointed to solicit the issuing of the bulls, and to propose in the consistory the candidates for those abbeys and bishoprics to which the king had the nomination, they received, at the expense of the persons promoted, a fee equivalent to the pension which might have been allowed to them. It was a kind of assignment which the king, their debtor, gave to them on the income of the benefice which he had been pleased to confer.

When those who had been nominated to consistorial benefices wished to have the honour of being proposed by the pope himself in the consistory, that they might the sooner gain possession, they paid two different sums called *propine*, the one for the pope, the other for the cardinal-protector.

But, when the latter was directed to propose for benefices, the bulls were not issued until after two formalities had taken place. He was first obliged to proclaim the candidate in a previous consistory ; then, in a second, to make the formal proposition of the consistorial benefice to which the pope had nominated. Thus the candidate lost as much in point of time as he gained in point of œconomy : for in this case he had but one *propina* to pay ; but then, on the other hand, he had to wait sometimes six months for the issuing of his bulls. In either event, the cardinal-protector was sure of receiving his *propina* : and, after all, he was, under that pompous title, nothing

nothing more than an agent employed by his nation in ecclesiastic and beneficiary affairs, and particularly those of which the decision was confined to the consistory.

From these details it must evidently appear that the cardinal de Bernis was personally interested in preserving the revenues of the Holy See. The single article of the *propine* annually yielded to him, on an average, from twenty-four to thirty thousand livres. He was not greedy: but the high style in which he was rather accustomed than obliged to live did not allow him to be perfectly disinterested. It was therefore always with a sort of repugnance, though always with success, that he applied for abatements: and this was during several years his most important employment, and the only contrariety he experienced at Rome.

We shall but slightly mention the opposition in 1775 by the French clergy to the project of uniting the useless order of the Antonines with that of Malta. Louis XVI. had already agreed with Pius on that business; the briefs which the pontiff was to issue were prepared; when suddenly the French prelates, animated by laudable zeal for what they termed the interests of the church, addressed very urgent remonstrances to the pope on the subject of the intended union. We will not trouble our readers with a detail of the erudite theologic arguments by which they endeavoured to awake scruples in the breast of his holiness: it will be sufficient to observe that Pius found himself very much embarrassed on the occasion, and thought it his duty to suspend the issuing of the briefs, and appoint a congregation to examine that question of so un-important a nature. He seriously said to Bernis, who listened to him, consoled him, encouraged him, and sometimes scolded him, "That measure is indispendable, if I wish to avoid exposing myself to reproach or remorse." The court of Versailles thought proper to allow him time for reflexion.

The pope, already ill advised, gave to the bull of incorporation a new form which displeased our ministry, who testified their displeasure with considerable warmth: and this was perhaps the only time previous to the revolution, when France assumed toward him a menacing tone. Vergennes wrote to Rome—"Let them not  
" drive

“ drive us to extremities : let them not force us to recollect the distinction, already so well known, between religion and politics.—Tell the pope,” added he—“ make him thoroughly sensible—that impunity is not to be expected in sporting with a king who is the firmest pillar of the pontifical throne.”—Vergennes had not an idea that he was uttering truths which would ere long be felt in their fullest force.

This pitiful affair chagrined the pontiff, whose mind was already tormented by more than one subject of uneasiness. It caused suspicions to fall on his friend, one of the principal authors of his elevation, the cardinal Giraud, to whom the ministry at Versailles attributed the impertinent modelling of the bull, and whom they accused of ingratitude. The cardinal de Bernis was sensibly hurt by the imputation: he bore a friendship to cardinal Giraud: he defended him with warmth, and, what was not usual on his part, in a style bordering upon harshness. He intimated that encouragement was too incautiously given in France to those philosophic maxims which, though good in themselves, might, in their application, involve the overthrow of religion, and, in successive gradation, that of many prejudices which it was important to preserve. This was certainly very natural language in the mouth of a courtier and a cardinal; but at the same time it proves that Bernis was endued with a sagacity of which that period furnished few examples, and a foresight which he has himself seen justified by subsequent events.

But this first storm was dissipated: the pope yielded; and the incorporation of the order of Saint Antony was effected in the mode that we had wished. The French clergy, who still thought themselves possessed of some strength, were not discouraged by this failure of success: two years after, they thought proper to remonstrate with the pope on his condescension for our government: they sounded the alarm on occasion of the suppression of some monastic orders. Pius already knew what he had to expect from an attempt to thwart a powerful sovereign whose support was necessary to him. He felt or feigned to feel a fit of anger against those prelates who seemed disposed to dictate to him. He expressly

ly said that "their reproaches, however respectfully conveyed, contained notwithstanding a lesson which did not suit him." If he had always received their suggestions in the same manner, he would have saved France and himself from many calamities.

If we except these transient disputes, and the quarrels respecting the Jesuits, in which France made a common cause with Spain, the first eight or ten years of Pius's pontificate passed with every mark of deference on his part to the French government. Whenever there was question of any demands of a critical nature, he was careful to compose his congregations of those cardinals who were the least inclined to raise difficulties, and the most disposed to gratify us. This was in great measure the work of Bernis, who was his counsellor, his comforter, and very rarely his censor. Accordingly, in 1782, the cardinal spoke of Pius in the following terms—"His virtues are more numerous than his defects; and, in his heart, he is a Frenchman."—Louis XVI. and Pius VI., in observing this mutual forbearance toward each other, seemed to have a presentiment that the time would come when each should stand in need of the other's aid: but they certainly did not foresee how fatal that harmony would prove to both parties at a time when it was no longer in season.

There reigned, then, an almost constant good-understanding between the courts of Rome and Versailles, when an incident, of as strange appearance to the one as to the other, for some time interrupted it—an incident which was very far from being unconnected with the French revolution, and consequently with the subversion of the papacy—I mean the famous prosecution of the cardinal de Rohan—that transaction which seemed preconcerted for the express purpose of at once covering with ignominy the higher order of nobility, the priesthood, and the throne, and to serve as a pretext and an apology for the attacks which were soon after made upon them.

We will not here recall to our reader's memory the part of that shameful complication of imprudence and meanness which exclusively concerns France; our nation has already been too long fatigued and shocked with

with the detail of the particulars: it is our duty to recount in this place the part only which relates to the Holy See.

The intelligence of the cardinal's having been arrested even in his pontifical robes was a thunder-stroke to the pope and the whole Sacred College. Pius felt himself deeply hurt that it had not at least been formally notified to him by the king: he nevertheless spoke of it to the cardinal de Bernis in the language rather of grief than of indignation: but he frankly owned to him that if the arrest was followed by judgment, it would be impossible for him to avoid recurring to the observance of the canonical rules.

Notwithstanding the philosophy of his principles and the moderation of his temper, Bernis at times recollected that he was a prince of the church; and, on important occasions, he warmly supported the pretended rights of the body to which he belonged. He sent information to his court that the measure hinted by the pope was unavoidable, if the cardinal de Rohan's trial was carried before a secular tribunal without the intervention of the Holy See and of the bishops delegated by it. The cardinal's relatives and friends had been apprehensive lest Bernis should show himself adverse to him, because they thought he fostered prepossessions against the Rohan family. But they were little acquainted with his disposition. Bernis was neither rancorous nor vindictive: he espoused the cause of his unfortunate colleague with the zeal of a generous man, and at the same time with as great moderation as could be expected of a cardinal.

The pope, on his part, though on other occasions so fiery and so impotent of his first emotions, conducted himself in this affair with greater circumspection than could have been supposed. One would have thought that his soul, softened in the school of adversity, was become more inclined to resignation. Exposed to so many contrarieties, he saw that government with which he had hitherto had the least reason to be dissatisfied, ready, like the others, to inflict a wound on the immunities of the Holy See. He saw the danger that he incurred by alienating the French court: he therefore endeavoured only to mollify and disarm it. But it was signified

signified to him from Versailles that he ought carefully to avoid meddling in that affair, or renewing the pretensions of the ancient pontiffs. This indirect menace deeply afflicted him: the friendship of Bernis now became more necessary to him than at any former period: he unbosomed his thoughts to him without reserve: "Write," said he, "that the king will find in me a disposition to remove every difficulty and to afford him satisfaction: but I expect from his piety some attention to the Holy See. I will not make any stir, I promise you: but can I refuse to protect the rights of the Sacred College—rights which are secured even by the *concordatum*? Confess that the question is a question of delicacy. Well! I will propose it to a congregation of six cardinals. Their opinion shall be prudent and temperate, or I will not follow it. I was urged to issue without delay a solemn brief asserting those rights of which an infringement is attempted. Perhaps I ought to do so: but—no!—I will content myself with writing a confidential letter to the king."

If the prejudices of education could have been excused in Pius, together with those of his country and station, even Philosophy herself would have pronounced this language to have been proper. But how is it possible to reconcile with philosophy, with the principles of any good government, the pretension of a priest, whether a native or a foreigner, who thought himself authorised to interfere in the trial for an offence purely temporal? Could a *concordatum*, wrested by insolent power from the hand of weakness in an age of ignorance, be paramount to those eternal laws on which rests the independence of a state? Such are the remarks which might have been made even by a catholic, if he retained the slightest notion of justice and reason. Pius appealed to Louis's *piety*, for the purpose of gaining a triumph for his own maxims: but people began to perceive, that according to the ideas of the Holy See and its ambitious supporters, piety was nothing else than a blind devotion to the will of the head of the church. Besides, *piety* was at that moment entirely out of the question at Versailles: the object in view was to gratify the vengeance of a woman who wore a diadem: and to that grand interest every other consideration

deration must silently yield, and yielded in effect. But that was a circumstance of which the court of Rome either were or affected to be ignorant.

While things were in this situation, the cardinal de Rohan hoping to mollify his enemies by resignation, or to experience greater indulgence from a tribunal to whose equity he had voluntarily intrusted himself—had submitted the examination of his cause to the parliament of Paris. This step was a new source of mortification, a new cause of embarrassment, for the Sacred College, who saw what they termed *their rights* betrayed by one of their own members. The pope, as he had intimated to Bernis, had appointed a congregation whose opinion he should take on the momentous question of which the determination gave him such uneasiness. He had composed it of such cardinals as at that time bore the highest character for moderation—Albani, dean of the Sacred College;—the grand penitentiary, Boschi, conspicuous for prudence, though he had signed the famous monitory against the duke of Parma;—Borromeo a singular character, but a man of great mental talents, and professing moderate principles with respect to the crowned heads;—Doria, formerly nuncio in France;—Negroni, who had invariably been agreeable to France and Spain;—and Buoncompagni, at that time secretary of state.

The unanimous opinion of this congregation was, that the pope should write two letters, the one to his Most Christian majesty, the other to the cardinal de Rohan; that, in the former he should represent, that, pursuant to the *concordatum*, cardinals and bishops were to be tried at Rome; that in the latter, he should reproach the cardinal de Rohan with a violation of his oath in acknowledging as his judges the members of the parliament of Paris.

Pius acted in conformity to the opinion of the congregation. His language to the king was tender and almost suppliant. “I pray your majesty,” said he, “that the  
“cardinal de Rohan’s cause may be carried before a com-  
“petent judge, whom I will delegate in concert with  
“your majesty. I hope you will imitate your predeces-  
“sors by affording me the very great consolation of see-  
“ing, that under your government, the rights of the  
“church



“ church are preserved, while, to my great affliction, they are elsewhere trampled under foot in various ways,” &c.

The king's ministers, without going to the bottom of the question, without even contesting the ridiculous privileges claimed by the court of Rome, answered that every man was at liberty to renounce his privileges, and that this was what the cardinal de Rohan had done. The letter itself met with an indifferent reception. Bernis was obliged to undertake its apology. According to his representation, “ the pope could not, without incurring general obloquy at Rome, without dishonouring himself in the face of the church, have been silent on the occasion. Besides, had not the peers and the members of parliament their peculiar judges, from whose tribunal they could not be debarred? It was less possible for the pope to refrain from acting in the business, as the assembly of the clergy had themselves set the example of appealing to Rome.”

It was thought somewhat strange at Versailles that the cardinal de Bernis should suffer himself to be so far led astray by the spirit of his order as to maintain such indefensible pretensions. “ Tell the pope,” said the ministry in their letter to him, “ that our kings have never allowed their hands to be tied up in that respect when the affairs are, whether closely or remotely, connected with state causes; that the cardinal's offence has no relation to his episcopal character; that the king could not give him a greater instance of indulgence than by allowing him a choice of the mode in which he wished to be tried.”

Such arguments as these were not likely to meet a welcome reception at Rome. The cardinal de Rohan's cause was supported there much rather because it was connected with the immunities of the church, than through any interest that was felt for him. On the contrary, the pope in particular was very angry with him for having thus lowered the dignity of the Roman purple: he was even somewhat hurt by the light unconcerned manner in which the cardinal, when writing to him the first time, proposed to him a person to succeed him in his episcopal functions which he could no longer perform. The ob-  
ject

ject in view (it was said at Rome) was to save the honour not of His Eminence who was now irretrievably degraded by his own conduct, but of the church.

The pope however had no success with the court of Versailles. In vain were his complaints clothed in moderate and supplicating language: their object was appreciated with that philosophic severity which had pervaded all classes of society and even the government itself. It was intimated to Pius that he ought to avoid reviving the ancient discussions, that even his own interest should point out to him the propriety of abandoning the cardinal de Rohan, since so few people in France were inclined to favour the pretensions of the clergy. Such was the purport of the answer which Louis XVI. returned to the pope. The congregation of cardinals were again consulted, and gave it as their opinion that the pope ought to write a second letter, which, without being less pathetic than the former, should contain, in favour of the claim of the Holy See, those *so conclusive* arguments that were to be found in the sacred canons. Pius was at all times disposed to rely on the efficacy of such a remedy: nor had his affair with the emperor yet cured him of that notion. He therefore sat down to compose, not so much a letter, as a theologic dissertation, which was hardly read in the public offices at Versailles.

Throughout Europe, the affair of the cardinal de Rohan was viewed under all its various aspects. Different opinions were entertained; different pretensions were advanced. Bernis, displaying the character of a courageous statesman rather than of a fanatic canonist, advised that this shameful business should be hushed in silence, to avoid involving the queen herself in a share of the disgrace. But the counsel came too late. The cabinet of Madrid regretted that an obscure intrigue should make so much noise, and proposed the adoption of some measure of conciliatory compromise. The emperor viewed the cardinal de Rohan as a prince of the holy Roman empire: he asserted his own rights as head of that empire, and would not consent that the pope should pronounce sentence without his concurrence. The elector of Mentz claimed his rights over a prince who, as bishop of Strasburg, was his suffragan. The diet of Ratisbon

Ratibon advanced his pretensions to take a part in a cause in which a state of the empire was concerned. But the parliament of Paris had the cause in their hands; and all the claims advanced were ineffectual. Bernis, however, returned to the charge: he extolled the pontiff's moderation. "Let people beware!" said he. "They invite dangers, they will cause an explosion, if they treat the Holy See with too little respect. By dint of opposition they may yet render it formidable." And, assuming, for the conclusion of his harangue, the florid style of his youth, "Is it not better," said he, "to yield to the cooing of the dove, than to expose themselves to the screams of the exasperated eagle?"—But what an eagle was Pius at this period! Ah! if he had always thought proper to confine himself to his *dovely* character, he would have saved France and himself from numerous calamities.

The French government, however, had at this time no causes of complaint against the court of Rome. It was sensible that the pontiff was only acting his part as was natural: it combated his pretensions, but without acrimony. Vergennes wrote that all the vile particulars of that affair were wholly unconnected with the precepts of the gospel. The king himself returned to the pope's erudite homily a pathetic but strongly negative answer: "Let not your holiness make renewed solicitation," said he: "for I cannot avoid renewing my refusal." And farther on—"We feel how justly your holiness is affected by the situation in which stands a bishop, a member of the Sacred College: but we pray you to consider that we ourselves are not free from uneasiness on occasion of this strange event. Besides, the cardinal himself has made choice of the tribunal by which he is to be judged: to remove the cause at present to any other were an instance of fickleness which would only furnish additional matter to employ the tongue of scandal."

Pius found himself in a very perplexing situation: for while France exhorted him not to meddle in that affair, the *zelanti* at Rome accused the cardinal secretary of state, Buoncompagni, of having inspired him with too great "indifference and remissness" in his conduct. This in-

justice brought him over to the maxims of moderation: and he assured the court of Versailles, that, without listening to the suggestions of fanaticism, he would content himself with preserving the honour of the Holy See, and taking measures to prevent the disgrace of the cardinal de Rohan from reflecting on the whole body of cardinals.

The Sacred College showed themselves less accommodating, even with respect to the cardinal de Rohan. They seriously said to the pope, "We will rather resign our hats\* than share our dignity with a man who should be declared guilty of fraud, forgery, and theft." In their private conversations, they spoke of their *unworthy* colleague in terms equally bitter. "Why," said they, "should we retain in our body, hitherto so illustrious and respected, a brother become infamous in the eyes of all Europe, and who would be expelled from his regiment if he were a soldier?" The generality of them would have wished, that, immediately when the order was issued for arresting the cardinal de Rohan, the pope had deprived him of his hat. Pius would have suffered himself to be led to that step, if Bernis had not dissuaded him. He awaited the opinion of the congregation of cardinals respecting the mode of conduct which it was proper for him to adopt: and they decided that the pontiff ought, in full consistory, provisionally to suspend the grand-almoner of France from all the functions peculiar to the cardinalate, until he should exculpate himself to his holiness; that he ought next to give notice of this measure to the king of France, and also to the king of Poland who had proposed him as a candidate for the cardinalian dignity.

In conformity to that decision, the pope held a consistory on the 13th of February 1786, and there pronounced a Latin discourse in which the grand-almoner was very severely treated, at least in appearance. Pius exposed in his harangue the behaviour of the "very inconsiderate

\* The cardinal's hat, as a distinctive badge of the dignity, is sufficiently known.

“ confiderate cardinal de Rohan\* :” he announced the fufpention of his dignities until he fhould, within fix months at fartheft, appear, either in perfon or by his representative, to exculpate himfelf from the charge of having fpontaneoufly fubmitted the trial of his caufe to an incompetent tribunal. “ From that moment,” added Pius, “ he deferved to be deprived of all his ecclefiastic dignities, as a foldier abandoning the army, ought to be degraded, expelled from the camp, and deprived of his military privileges.” (The Sacred College and its head appear to have been fond of comparifons drawn from the military profeflion.) “ But at leaft we cannot avoid provisionally fufpending him from all the honours, all the decorations, all the rights, annexed to the cardinalian dignity, even from his right of concurring in the election of a fovereign pontiff.”

Immediately after this oftentatious ceremony, the pope wrote to Louis XVI. in a very pathetic ftyle to acquaint him with the motives of his determination: and the Sacred College notified it to the grand-almoner in a letter in which they at once began to put it in execution. In the eyes of his colleagues, Rohan was now nothing more than a private individual: they withheld from him thofe pompous titles which the court of Rome had invented in contempt of Chriftian humility. They no longer addrefs him as “ Your Eminence,” or “ My Lord Cardinal,” but fimplly, “ You.”

Thefe apparent fymptoms of anger and feverity were, however, nothing more than a cloke under which lurked one of thofe intrigues fo familiar to the Holy See. It was difcovered at Verfailles that the grand-almoner’s fecretary kept up a regular correpondence with the cardinal dean, and fome other cardinals, who were attached to the party of the Jefuits; that they employed the agency of that Victoria Lepri, who was at this time carrying on her famous law-fuit againft the pope, and who was in habits of intimate connexion with the Albani. Under pretence of fupporting the pontifical authority, they wifhed to prevail on Pius juridically to fummmon the grand-almoner before his tribunal. This was a triumph which they wifhed to procure for the car-

\* “ *Inconfultiffimus cardinalis de Rohan.*”

dinal de Rohan, who had long been secretly connected with the principal partisans of the defunct society, and on whose influence an ill-founded reliance was placed at Rome. This was a sure mode of bringing the pope under the displeasure of the courts of France and Spain. But the plot was discovered by the skill of the cardinal secretary of state, and defeated by his firmness. It was however a great point gained by the complotters, to have led Pius to the bold step which he had taken in full-consistory. The court of Versailles wished to have prevented it: but the intimation of that wish came too late. Bernis, who had a very embarrassing part to act, endeavoured to justify the pontiff to the best of his power; he signified in his letter that he had never found him more tractable than on that occasion; but that it had been impossible for Pius any longer to resist the importunities by which he was attacked on every side. "Besides," said the cardinals, of whose sentiments Bernis was the interpreter, "how can you expect us to show so great tenderness to one of our colleagues accused of very grievous offences, while you treat him so rigorously at Paris?"

Pius's brief, and the address which had preceded it, caused a great sensation in France. The brief, although worded with circumspection, must necessarily produce the effect of exciting a contest on the subject of jurisdiction in an affair which was already in the hands of the parliament of Paris. That body even maintained that the brief infringed the liberties of the Gallican church of which they had ever shown themselves zealous supporters; and they ordered the defendant to pay no regard to it.

This incident caused great perplexity to the cardinal de Rohan and even the pope himself. Should the cardinal protest against the decree of the parliament, he would produce in the minds of his judges an unfavourable disposition toward him: and could the pope overlook the affront offered to him by the public rejection of a brief which he had conceived himself authorised to issue? As the court of France did not at this time entertain unfriendly sentiments toward the Holy See, they gave a turn to the affair, which prevented all noise, without at the same time sacrificing those principles from which they would

would suffer no derogation. The pope's brief was, agreeably to the wish of the parliament, considered as non-existent, but not rejected with the same publicity that had attended some former transactions. With respect to the decree of the Sacred College, it was, for form-sake, delivered to the governor of the Bastille, with an injunction, however, that he should not forward it to its destination.

But this incident awakened the attention of government to the dangerous pretension of the foreign cardinals, who affected a dependence on two authorities at the same time. "What means," it was asked, "that oath which obliges them to maintain the rights, the honours, and the privileges, of their order? and *against whom* are they to maintain them? Can it be against their temporal sovereign? Such is the interpretation implicitly contained in the decree of the Sacred College, but which will never be admitted in France, where it would be thought better for ever to renounce all idea of having French cardinals."

Let us observe, by the way, that this scandalous adventure of the cardinal de Rohan ought, on various accounts, to be considered as one of the efficient, perhaps even one of the most immediate, causes of the French revolution, and that it was at the same time one of the severest blows that could be levelled at the church of Rome. It disgraced the court, degraded what was called the *royal authority*, and prepared the public mind for a severe discussion of the relations existing between the catholic states and the Holy See, and of those delicate questions which despotism, if it had been prudent would have suffered to sleep undisturbed, especially at a period when progressing knowledge led to the examination of those ridiculous prejudices which had no other sanction than that of their antiquity. How could mankind have retained any respect for that Roman church when they beheld the conduct of one of its princes, whom his own imprudence and inconsideration, to say nothing worse, had rendered the tool, the confidant, and at length the derision, of a corrupted court? when they saw him, amid the infamy with which he disgraced himself, attempt

tempt to retain a remnant of dignity which only served to render more conspicuous the ignominy of his situation.

The cardinal de Rohan had for his friend and confidant a certain abbé Georgel, who, on this critical occasion, served him with his usual address, but with an apostolic zeal which could not be viewed in any other than a ridiculous light. In a new consistory held on the third of April, the pope had nominated, to perform the functions of the cardinal as bishop of Strasburg, the dean of the chapter of the cathedral there. The abbé Georgel, who was one of his grand-vicars, affected to impress the public with a persuasion that the suspension of the bishop's functions was but temporary, and to interest the sensibility of his flock for their pastors captivity. In his stead he issued a mandate by which he permitted in his diocese the use of eggs during the Lent: and in that mandate he compared the cardinal to the apostle Paul "writing to the faithful from the recesses of his prison:" and comparing himself to Saint Paul's disciple Timothy, he expressed his hope that people would pay the same attention to the disciple as to the apostle. This double comparison gave rise to several sarcasms: it was asked, at Rome particularly, whether any account was to be found in the Acts of the Apostles of Paul and Timothy having been implicated in a "necklace" business. "The cardinal de Rohan," it was said, "suffers, like Saint Paul, for his excess of faith: but is it for the faith in Jesus Christ?"

The cardinal de Bernis did not indulge in those witticisms: this unfortunate affair caused him various mortifications, and furnished him with opportunities of displaying his characteristic goodness and moderation. He knew in what light he ought to view both the disgraceful trial of de Rohan, and the pretensions of the Holy See: but, as a courtier, he feared the degradation of the court, and as a cardinal, he felt for the immunities of the church. He had the—courage, will it be called, or weakness?—to undertake the defence of that brief which militated against our principles. He received an intimation from Versailles expressive of surprise that a French prelate should



should seem to approve maxims which tended to secure to the pope a jurisdiction over foreign ecclesiastics. Bernis mildly repelled the charge: but, in his answer, he ventured to defend "those privileges, which had flowed from the piety of kings."—"It was permitted," he added, "to exclaim against a violation of them, provided there existed a disposition to submit if the king thought proper to suspend them. At the same time he had no objection to make, nor had the pope himself, to the measure which had been adopted.—With respect to the letter written by the Sacred College to the cardinal de Rohan, Pius wished above all things to avoid provoking any disturbances, but he could not refuse to allow that step, urged as he had been by the solicitations and reproaches of those who felt an interest in the dignity of the Holy See."

The court of Versailles condescended to admit his reasons, and even agreed that it ought to do justice to Pius's moderation. For this he was indebted to the influence of Bernis, and the temperate prudence of Buoncompagni. The latter, notwithstanding the pope's want of affection for him, had sufficient weight to stifle an affair which, at a different time and in other hands, might have produced very serious quarrels. Each party asserted their pretensions, but without ill humour. Some slight triumphs were gained: none was extorted by force: none left behind it any vestiges of animosity. The agents-general of the clergy claimed the immunities of their body in favour of the cardinal de Rohan. This was one of those conservatory acts which prove nothing, and which do not pledge to any thing.—The internuncio Pieracchi represented that his mission had entirely failed of its object if the pope's brief and the letter from the Sacred College remained in the hands of the governor of the Bastille without being seen by the cardinal. He was permitted to communicate them to him: for which purpose he repaired to the Bastille, and read them to the cardinal, but without allowing him to take copies of them.

The term of the cardinal's tribulations now approached: in the beginning of June, he was, by a decree of the

the parliament, acquitted of the crime laid to his charge: from which moment all the pretensions of the Holy See, fell to the ground. But, although the cardinal de Rohan had been acquitted by a court of justice, Louis's grounds of complaint against him still remained undiminished. He was banished to his abbey of Chaise-Dieu, and commanded to resign the office of grand-almoner.—The Holy See, however, had not the same reasons for continuing its severity after the decree which had declared him innocent: the honour of the Sacred College could desire nothing further; and the pope, in a consistory held on the 18th of June, re-instated him in his cardinalian dignity. But he could not screen him from ridicule and shame, or remove the prejudice which such an adventure excited against the whole Sacred College.

This was the only contest of a serious nature which the court of France had in eleven years with the court of Rome. But the Holy See was doomed to be tormented by all the powers of Europe in their turns: and it was from that which had shown it the greatest tenderness, and for which it had testified the greatest regard, that it was fated to receive the most violent wounds and at length the wound of death. Such, beyond the Pyrenees, that animal, armed by nature and his own courage\*, is seen exhibiting to a circus crowded with curious gazers the spectacle of a combat in which twenty assailants alternately attack him, defy his formidable arms which their dexterity renders ineffectual, bristle his brawny neck with painful arrows, and make the blood stream down his vigorous flanks: his strength is exhausted: the bell has tolled his last hour: the vulgar combatants retire: the *matador* alone advances within the lists: all eyes are fixed upon him: his eyes are riveted on his victim, whose motions he watches, whose craft he foils, till at length, uplifting his arm guided by dexterity and nerved with vigour, he strikes, and the victim falls to the ground.

Thus,

\* See a description of the bull-fights in any book of travels in Spain.

Thus, during fifteen years, had the enemies of the Holy See sapped the foundations of the papal throne ; and, during that struggle, France had stood aloof. At length she appears, and is alone to occupy the scene.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *Ecclesiastic Reforms undertaken by the National Assembly of France.*

**A**LTHOUGH the government of France had remained an inactive and sometimes even a benevolent spectator of those contests which the court of Rome had hitherto had to sustain against so many sovereigns jealous of their temporal authority, the sensible part of the nation was nevertheless impressed with the principles of which those sovereigns made a tardy application. It was by her historians, her canonists, and especially her philosophers, that they had been professed with the greatest energy. It was in her language, which was become the universal language of enlightened Europe, that they had been developed and brought down to the level of every mind : and there was not perhaps, during this latter half of the eighteenth century, a country in Europe where men were more tired, than in France, of the pretensions of the Holy See, more ashamed of the tributes paid to it by credulity, more shocked by the conduct of the priests, the opulence of the higher clergy, and that innumerable mob of monks who did not even atone for their inutility by leading an exemplary life.

Among

Among the superior classes, who alone had any influence on the government, a perfect unanimity of opinion and of wishes prevailed respecting those abuses. But to reform them was no easy task. Although the reason of every enlightened man called for their abolition, there were numbers, and these not the least powerful, who were interested in their preservation. Louis XV., amid the disorders of a dissipated life, had retained a sort of mechanical devotion. A certain instinct taught him that his own power was connected with that of the church: he did not wish that it should become his rival: but he was not sorry to see it reign under him and for him. His successor, who felt a much more genuine devotion, had inherited the same maxims. Besides, under both reigns, the clergy, who constituted one of the three orders of the state, and even the only one which constantly had a kind of organisation, stood as watchful sentinels around the throne, and by their support repaid the support they received from it, whenever their own immunities did not come in collision with the regal authority.

A few sparks of philosophy had even reached a part of that order, who were called the superior clergy: and by these prelates much more ambitious than philosophical, certain reforms had long since been projected; but they were such as, while they diminished the prerogatives of the Holy See, were to increase the power of those projectors. They did not wish a rupture with the pontiff, whom they considered as the centre of catholic unity: but neither did they choose to live in servile dependence on him. They were sufficiently persuaded, for instance, that to the spiritual authority belonged the right of granting marriage-dispensations; but they thought themselves competent to grant them. They participated the general wish respecting the multiplicity of convents and the enormity of their wealth: they wished to purify and thin the ranks of that numerous host of ecclesiastical militia, but not entirely to disband it. Reduced within proper bounds, they thought it useful for the defence of the church, and even, in a certain degree, contributory to their own consequence, as their vanity took a pleasure in contemplating that hierarchy of which themselves occupied the most elevated grade. Thus they were not  
averse

averse to reforms : on the contrary, they wished for them—not yet aware, that, in treading that slippery path, one has not always the power of stopping where he chooses. Nay, even among the lower clergy, who were the objects of their disdain, there were men more clear-sighted than they with respect to the common interests of the whole ecclesiastical body.

Long will be remembered the answer given by a monk to Monsieur de Loménie, since a cardinal—an answer which under the shape of a trifling play of words, contained a striking prophecy which subsequent events have so fully accomplished. Monsieur de Loménie, at that time archbishop of Toulouse, was president of the board of commissioners appointed by the clergy to promote the reformation of the monasteries. Conversing one day on his plan with a monk who did not entirely co-incide with him in opinion, and who to the best of his power defended the cause of his brethren, the archbishop insisted, and peevishly said, “ Yes ! ’tis a determined point : it is absolutely necessary to reform this *monkery* \*.”—Take “ care ! ” replied the other : “ after the *monkery*, they “ will proceed to the *priestery*, and at length, my lord, to the *bishopry*.”

But the superior clergy were connected by too many links with the throne, and thought their existence too secure, to admit of similar presentiments. Besides, how could they foresee the concatenation of events which were soon to verify them ? With an almost philosophic courage, therefore, they pursued that kind of Reformation which was not likely to reach themselves. The court of Rome began to be alarmed at their proceedings in the year 1787, the period when the papacy suffered the most painful wounds from all quarters except France. The French clergy were assembled in one of those periodical meetings where they determined the amount of the contributions which they should pay to the king under the denomination of a free gift ; and they had manifested a disposition to attempt the suppression of certain abuses. The pope was on the point of addressing to them a monitory

\* *Mainaille*, a contemptible mob of monks : *prêtraille* and *mitraille* (here entered *priestery* and *bishopry*) are words of similarly contemptuous import, coined from *prêtre* a *priest*, and *mitre* a *mitre*.

nitory letter to divert them from those innovations which were gaining ground in several states. He communicated his intention to the cardinal de Bernis, who combated it with that ascendancy which he always possessed over Pius, and which increased on critical occasions; and he succeeded in persuading his holiness that the measure was "at least useless."

In fact, our government was now in its turn entering the career of reforms alarming to the Holy See. We had obtained the suppression of the order of Celestines in France: during the course of the same year, 1787, we demanded, and in a tone which admits not a refusal from a weaker power, that the Celestines of the Comtat of Avignon should also be suppressed: and, without giving to the pope any notice of our intention, we seized the property which those monks possessed in our territory. The court of Rome sighed at that violent proceeding, and especially at the ungracious manner in which it took place: but they sighed in secret, not choosing to alienate a government which had hitherto been the protector and comforter of the Holy See. At the same time a decree of the privy-council suppressed the ancient Observance \* of Cluni: and it was only by the voice of public fame that the pope was informed of the transaction! It is true, we did nothing more than exert our just rights: but we had not accustomed Pius to such mortifications.

Still more poignant was his grief when he first received intelligence of an edict tending to meliorate the situation of the protestants in France. Even cardinal Buoncompagni himself, temperate as he was in every thing which did not immediately affect the interests of the holy Roman church, viewed that act with the eyes of a catholic priest. He did not scruple to be ambitious, jealous, avid of glory, to pursue a licentious course of life so severely prohibited by that religion whose welfare was so dear to him: he fancied that God was much less offended by his irregularities than he would be on seeing a period put in France to the persecution of some millions of peaceable subjects, who did not think as he thought, but

\* Some of the religious orders were split into sects and parties, the one valuing themselves on a more rigid *observance* of their original rules, than the others. Hence the term.

but who led a somewhat more exemplary life. Already he trembled lest the indulgence should be carried so far as to allow them the public exercise of their mode of worship.

He recovered, however, from his alarm on observing that the edict proceeded no farther than granting them the civic character, to insure the legitimate existence of their children. "But if"—said he to the cardinal de Bernis, who was the more readily disposed to administer comfort to him, as he had seemed to participate his apprehensions—"if, as the report had prevailed, there had been question of establishing in France that toleration which is so much vaunted in an age that calls itself philosophic, his holiness could not have avoided opposing to that dangerous innovation his paternal but energetic remonstrances."

At Rome, however, the pope and his ministers were the persons who received with the greatest resignation that first effort of tolerance: the rest of the Sacred College were thrown by it into the deepest consternation: and, in the alarm felt by their hypocritic zeal, they would even have voted for some measure which they might have called vigorous, but which the rest of the world would have justly considered as imprudent, and which would have produced no other effect than that of accelerating their downfall. But Pius's moderation checked them. Why should we not do him the justice to which he is entitled on this occasion? Why should we, violating truth under pretence of serving the cause of philosophy, render him more odious than he really was? We will assert, then—at the risk of rousing the indignation of those modern fanatics who insist that their enemy did not, could not, take any steps that were not criminal—that Pius acted, under those circumstances, with as temperate prudence as a *pope* possibly could. Not a harsh expression emanated from his pen; not an intolerant piece issued from the Roman press. The pontiff contented himself with writing to the cardinal of Sens, who had just been elevated to the post of prime-minister of France; and the purport of his letter was to congratulate him on his promotion, and to recommend to his care the catholic religion. It is true, he saw a ground  
of

of confidence in what he termed the "piety" of Louis XVI.: it is true also that the cardinal de Bernis used all his exertions to keep him within the bounds of moderation: but was there not some merit in following a prudent counsel at such a critical moment? That prudence, however, was but transient: the influence of the cardinal de Bernis was very far from exclusive: it was often counterbalanced by that of some theologists equally blind as obstinate, of some lawyers who swayed the pontiff by means of that which most successfully operated upon his mind—by flattery.

At this period the cardinal de Bernis ought to have inspired the pope with greater confidence in him, because although perhaps he might not internally approve his holiness's maxims, at least he adopted his language, even when addressing his own court. He conjured them to regard, not the pontiff's complaints (he uttered none), but his anxieties. He was himself, he said, not far from conceiving similar uneasiness: he was afraid the development of the principles contained in the edict relative to the protestants would shake the foundations of the established religion in France: then proceeding to notice the Observance of Cluni so abruptly suppressed, it grieved him, he said, that France, which had set the example of respect for the Holy See, had been deficient in it on that occasion by not inviting the pontiff to concur by a brief in effecting that reform.

But the die was cast. The French court, though systematically moderate in its conduct toward that of Rome, was obliged to yield to the torrent of public opinion, which laboured to over-rule the government until able to overturn it. Even the clergy, notwithstanding the fanatic wishes of some members of their body, notwithstanding the interested wishes of almost the whole order, naturalised some principles of political œconomy amid the prejudices of catholicism. They suffered knowledge to diffuse its rays among the people, because they could not smother its light with impunity, or without danger to themselves. They admitted some maxims of that toleration whose voice was heard by every man of unwarped mind and honest heart, in the hope that by making slight sacrifices they might evade the necessity of greater and more painful. It was a kind of alliance—or, if you please,



please, compromise—which they formed with the philosophers for the purpose of diminishing the influence of the latter, or at least participating it. But the clerical body, of which one of the principal members had just been placed at the head of the ministry, found the philosophers less generous, or more perseverant in the pursuit of their plan, than had been expected. Their first successes, instead of disarming, inspired them with additional courage. The assembly of the *notables* was the first theatre which exhibited an energetic development of those principles that were destined to regenerate France: it was there that the bold spirit of reform made trial of its strength; and from that moment our nation must have seen what it had to hope for, and the court of Rome what they had to fear.

During the interval which elapsed between the period of this assembly and that of the states-general, the court, which was already alarmed on its own account, and saw that the situation of the finances was one of the principal subjects on which it would be obliged to answer, began an anxious examination of the contributions of various kinds whose weight pressed on the shoulders of the people. That which they paid to the court of Rome appeared one of those from which they ought in the first place to be relieved. That tribute had long been viewed by philosophy, and even by rational religion, as ridiculous on the part of those who paid it, shameful on the part of him who accepted it. Had it even been moderate, it would nevertheless have deserved those two epithets: but people indignantly exclaimed against the enormity of the sums which annually flowed from France to Rome. Many persons were persuaded that they amounted to several millions: and that idea would have been just, if the annats, that is to say the entire produce of one year's income, had been strictly paid on each appointment to the consistorial benefices. But, on the one hand, at the time when the *concordatum* was concluded, each of those benefices had, in the table of rates annexed to that treaty, been estimated much below its real value; and, on the other, each new possessor of such benefices almost invariably obtained a considerable reduction of the sum which by that valuation he was bound to pay.

The

The following summary, taken from the *datario's* office itself, will prove how far people were mistaken in that respect.

From the first of January 1779 to the end of December 1788, the fees of every kind paid by French subjects amounted to the sum of seven hundred thousand three hundred and sixty-nine Roman crowns, and eighty bajocchi—about three millions six hundred and seventy-six thousand nine hundred and thirty-eight livres, fourteen sols\*.

\* One hundred and fifty-three thousand two hundred and five pounds, fifteen shillings, and seven pence, sterling.

They

# They consisted of the following articles :

	<i>Rom. Crown. Baj.</i>	<i>Livres.</i>	<i>Sols.</i>
For consistorial matters, bishoprics, abbeys, institutions, unions, - - -	446,002	90	
For beneficiary matters, bulls, provisions, vacancies by decease, co-adjutorships, resignations, indults, secularisations, habitations, dispensations, on account of age - - -	58,050	65	
For marriage dispensations	177,928	55	
For simple copies of deeds and letters of nomination, as fees for anticipated possession - - - - -	18,387	70	
Total	700,369	80	
		3,676,938	14
Which, taken on an average of years, made the annual sum of - - - - -		367,693	17*

During the year 1788, it is true, these payments had been heavier than in the preceding years, because the promotions had been more numerous. The sum would have amounted to a hundred and ninety-eight thousand four hundred crowns: but the cardinal de Bernis obtained a reduction of it to a hundred and twenty-five thousand eight hundred and thirteen, or about six hundred and sixty thousand five hundred and eighteen livres, five sols†.

Such were the results presented to Louis XVI.'s council in the month of March 1789.

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Although

\* Fifteen thousand three hundred and twenty pounds, eleven shillings, and six pence halfpenny, sterling.

† Twenty-seven thousand five hundred and twenty-one pounds, eleven shillings, and ten pence halfpenny, sterling.

Although they fell materially short of the idea which had been formed of that tribute, the court nevertheless thought that the payment of even such a sum must prove very burdensome, especially in the existing critical state of the finances; and therefore it wished to assume to itself the merit of suppressing it. But the cardinal de Bernis stood forth as the advocate of the Holy See: he represented that it was in pursuance of the *concordatum* that those moderate contributions were paid; that, in affairs of that nature, innovations were dangerous; that he had invariably laboured to obtain as great abatements as possible, &c.

The idea of suppression had not originated in a fit of ill-will: the French government renounced it for the present; and the court of Rome thought a part of its revenues was saved. But how great were its alarms, and those even of Bernis himself, when they read, in the proceedings of several of the bailiwicks, violent declamations against the *enormous sums* which France paid for dispensations, bulls, &c. Bernis undertook to defend the cause of the papacy, not only as a theologist, but also as a statesman. "They are then ignorant," said he in writing to Versailles, "that those *enormous sums* do not on an average, annually amount to more than four hundred thousand livres\*; that the importation of our sugars and coffee into the Ecclesiastical State causes a return of four times that sum to France; that all Rome are clad in our stuffs of Lyons; that if the pontiff were to give to the English that preference over us which they solicit, and which in a fit of resentment he might be induced to grant, we should lose more than we could gain by the suppression."

These arguments might have appeared plausible to a court which had reason to fear, setting the example of reform: but they had no weight with an assembly whom the voice of the people imperiously commanded to undertake the work of reformation; and the payment of the annats was one of the first abuses removed by the states general.

At the news of this event, a deep and universal consternation

\* About sixteen thousand six hundred and sixty-six pounds, sterling.

sternation prevailed in the capital of the catholic world. Bernis himself, the cool, the moderate, the philosophic Bernis, could not without extreme difficulty submit to this first blow struck at his immense revenue. The suppression of the annats alone deprived him of between twenty and thirty thousand livres per annum. That of the tithes soon followed, and proved yet more fatal to him. The chief part of his income from the archbishopric of Alby, from his priory of La Charité-sur-Loire, and of his two other abbeys, was in tithes. He bitterly complained of a treatment "so unforeseen and so unmerited," as he asserted. "He certainly enjoyed a brilliant fortune: but all Europe knew in what manner he had employed it during the last twenty years. Already standing on the brink of the grave, would he in future have sufficient for his own support, after having given bread to such numbers?"

His first step was to reform his household.

But these complaints of a single individual, however estimable he might be in other respects, were drowned and lost amid the loud cries uttered by the Roman court and its dependents. "Behold," said they on every side, "the *concordatum* violated, the clerks and secretaries ruined, the pope much worse treated by France than he has been by Joseph II.!" Pius undoubtedly participated those painful feelings: but he had for some time sufficient self-command to refrain from giving them vent. He was on the point of writing to the king a suppliant letter: but it was not the king who aimed the strokes that were inflicted on him. Bernis recommended to him resignation, which himself found so difficult of practice in his own case.

The pope contented himself with ordering public prayers for the relief of the necessities of the church. He might be pardoned for employing that consolation: but that was not the only balm of which his wounded bosom stood in need. At his invitation Bernis waited on him; he found him in affliction but without weakness, full of respectful confidence in the assistance of heaven and the religious disposition of the king of France. The

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zelanti,

*zelanti*, who had less faith in those resources, thought he had others still remaining of a more efficacious nature. They advised him to pen a brief in which devotion and theologic erudition should lend each other mutual aid, and in which he should speak a language suitable for the head of the church. He resisted their suggestions, and contented himself with writing to Louis a suppliant and paternal letter, persuaded that the national assembly, already so formidable, would not in this instance take his conduct amiss. The success of his letter was such as he might have expected: very fortunately for him it produced no effect whatever.

Although measures of energy followed each other in rapid succession, still however the national assembly showed some remnant of deference for the head of the church: they wished him to explain his sentiments respecting the reforms which had been made in it. The pontiff desired a second conference with the cardinal de Bernis. "I will," said he to him, "consent to the suppression of the annats, so far as personally concerns myself: but I cannot give a categorical answer without the concurrence of the other parties interested, especially the cardinals, whose *propine* are founded on the revenue of the annats." He consulted the three cardinals who were chiefs of the ecclesiastic orders—Albani, of that of the bishops—Borromeo, of the priests—Altieri, of the curates. These cardinals, evidently perceiving that all resistance would be ineffectual, consented to the suppression of the annats, "but without noise," added they, "without derogation from existing treaties." It is not very easy to discover what salvo they hoped to establish by that clause. Bernis however exulted in this trifling success: but it was the last: he had now nought further to expect than misfortunes for the Sacred College and himself. He attempted to make intercession in favour of those secretaries and clerks of the chancellery and *datario's* office who had purchased their employments, and who were necessary to us so long as there should exist any relations between France and the Holy See. . . . .

But the most painful wound had not yet been inflicted.

It

It was given on the second of November 1789, when a decree of the national assembly pronounced all the possessions of the clergy to be national property. This decree excited the indignation of the Sacred College : on Pius its only effect was consternation ; and he said to those about his person, “ I foresee great misfortunes : but I “ will persist in my silence.” His small remaining stock of moderation was gradually exhausted by these trials. His secretary of state, Zelada, successor to Buoncompagni, was a man of keen subtle character : his manner was mild and affable ; and he would have filled his post with propriety in ordinary circumstances : but, at such a tempestuous season as this, his want of energy and genuine dexterity rendered him very inadequate to the task. The influence of his moderation, however concurred in preventing the imprudent steps which the pontiff might have taken in the year 1789, and from which he forbore. They both said, and their conduct proved their words to be in unison with their thoughts, that “ by breaking “ silence in these times of agitation and trouble, they “ would only increase the evil.”—Soon, nevertheless, shall we see the pope breaking his silence, and augmenting the mischief which he hoped to prevent.

It is true, the strokes levelled at his antiquated immunities were daily increasing. Before the conclusion of that year which had already been so fatal to him, the king was invited by a decree to forbear nominating to any benefice until the general plan relative to the clergy should be presented. This was the completion of the cardinal de Bernis’ sorrows ; and he was heard mournfully to say on this occasion, “ Lo ! the cardinal-protector of France “ is left without functions and without emoluments !” He had never injured any person : he was old and infirm ; and it would have been cruel not to pity him : but it is in the very nature of great measures such as those by which he suffered, to strike at random and without respect of persons.

Hitherto, however, the attacks had been wholly confined to the pope’s spiritual authority : but the moment was now come when a part of what he called his *patrimony* was to be invaded. Bouche, one of the deputies

ties from Provence, was the first to express a wish for the re-union of the Comtat of Avignon to the French monarchy.

That petty tract of country had been a source of frequent disputes between the kings of France and the popes. The legitimacy of its acquisition by the Holy See had remained problematical among historians, but incontestable among the canonists. This question, which the French government consented to leave undecided while on good terms with the pontiff, was decided by overt act whenever it had any cause of complaint against him. Thus, twice in a single century—the first time under Louis XIV., the other under his successor—the Comtat had been seized by France, in whose hand this was an effectual mean of chastising those popes with whom she was dissatisfied. At the epoch of Clement XIV.'s elevation to the papacy she had been in possession of it since the time when Clement XIII. had incurred her displeasure by his ridiculously fanatic conduct toward the duke of Parma. The long-expected bull, which suppressed the order of the Jesuits, was, in 1774, the signal of reconciliation, and was soon followed by the restitution of the Comtat.

From that period, however, the possession of it was no longer so peaceably enjoyed by the Holy See as it had been in times past. The pontiff experienced some contrarieties from the tax-farmers, who wished to extend to it the sale of salt: his right to certain tolls was contested: in abolishing the order of the Celestines in France, we maintained that the suppression ought also to include the city of Avignon; and, as a preliminary step to that effect, we began by seizing the property which those monks possessed in our territory.

These petty disputes were affairs of considerable magnitude for the Holy See, and particularly for its vice-legate. They prepared the public mind for a revolution. People began to view with impatient eye a small state inclosed within the bounds of a great kingdom, and, by its position, often serving as the haunt of robbers and affording shelter to smugglers: they examined more attentively by what title a foreign priest possessed a property



ty in the interior of France ; and doubts were raised concerning its legitimacy.

The inhabitants of Avignon and of the Comtat were even at this time divided into two parties. The one—which, it must be owned, was the more numerous—bore without murmuring, a yoke which the popes had almost always rendered light. They saw themselves on the same footing with the natives of France in every advantageous point of view ; and, as subjects of the pope, they enjoyed some privileges which the French did not participate. They were not overburdened with taxes: and in the feebleness of the Roman government they saw nought but mildness.—The others, on the contrary, felt their indignation raised by the idea of being enslaved to a pontiff, and regretted that they were not completely members of a nation which, even under the monarchy, acted a conspicuous part. These latter had for their adherents all the men of energetic minds, all those whose philosophic penetration could form a just idea of priestly usurpation and tyranny, all those whose turbulent spirit delighted in innovation.

Such were the dispositions of people's minds in the Comtat when the first shouts of liberty were heard in France. The identity of manners and language, vicinity, and the multiplicity of existing relations, produced such effect as must naturally have been expected ; and the inhabitants were soon in unison with the rest of the French. In August 1789 they already had their national guards: soon after, a deputation from Avignon petitioned for the re-union of their city with France. They did not yet speak the general wish of their concitizens ; but it was now easy to foresee the fate of the Comtat.

As soon as intelligence was received there of the motion made by Bouche, the administration appointed by the pope declared their resolution of continuing faithful to his holiness.

Meanwhile, however, the people assembled, and, without yet shaking off the papal yoke, framed for themselves a new constitution. There, as elsewhere, the public voice was imperious: the vice-legat, to retain at least a shadow of authority, wished that this incipient revolution

revolution should appear to be his work, and gave his sanction to the new constitution. But the court of Rome, who thought themselves at a distance from the danger, were less accommodating: in April 1790, a bull arrived at Avignon which annulled all the ordinances extorted from the vice-legate, and prohibited the papal commissioners to publish them. From that period, Avignon became a theatre of dissensions that drenched with blood the beautiful district of which that city is the capital. The details of those transactions belong to the history of the French revolution; and we will here notice such particulars only as have a direct relation to the pontificate of Pius VI.

His bull had brought to Avignon the seeds of discord. The vice-legate, no longer thinking himself safe there, retired to Carpentras, where he protested against all that had been done.

Meanwhile the French party saw the number of their partisans rapidly increasing; and on the twenty-sixth of October the nine districts of the Comtat unanimously expressed their wish to be incorporated with the department of the Mouths of Rhone. Soon after this, the opposite party gained a temporary ascendancy. The court of Rome proceeded no farther than intriguing in the Comtat, and had avoided all explanation of its sentiments respecting those innovations which appeared to be desired by the majority of the inhabitants. Its partisans, affecting to act as the organs of the entire district, sent to the pope a deputation announcing to him that it was the unanimous and earnest wish of the people to adopt the French constitution, and conjuring him no longer to persevere in a silence of which the continuation might produce a rupture of the social compact: "but," added the deputies, "if his holiness accept the decrees of the French constituent assembly relative to the civil organisation of the clergy, the Comtat will remain inviolably attached to him, and will immediately declare any usurpation of its territory to be *high treason against society*."

Pius was too much infatuated with the immunities of the Holy See, and too ill advised, to adopt such a *mezzo termine*. A hatred of French principles was become one of

of the dogmata of the Sacred College. The equivocal conduct of the pontiff and of his vice-legatc weakened the party who were opposed to the union. On revolutionary ground one first bold step is soon followed by another, especially when the hand of power is at such a distance as to leave a confident hope of impunity. The assembly of the Comtat declared that they ceased to consider the vice-legatc as the pope's representative, and prohibited all future applications to him, under the penalties of prevarication. They did not however decree an absolute disjunction from the papacy, but named three *conservators*, who swore allegiance to "the nation, the law, and the "Holy See."

Avignon, now become the centre of insurrection, outstripped the rest of the Comtat in the revolutionary career. On the seventh of February 1791, it celebrated the festival of the federation. The archbishop and his clergy refusing to take the civic oath, the *commune* declared the archbishop to have forfeited his dignity, and deprived the canons of their prebends. At length, toward the middle of March, the Avignonefc abrogated the pope's temporal sovereignty over them, and seized his revenues. Carpentras still continued retractory, and determined to persevere in its former allegiance to him.

But the hour was now approaching when the fate of the Comtat was to be definitively determined. The national assembly made it the subject of their deliberations in the month of April. Bouche proved that there was a plurality of fourteen thousand votes in favour of the union; Menou, by a diplomatic discussion, proved the lawfulness of the measure; and it was voted in spite of all the oratory and erudition displayed by Maury. But it was not carried into effect without the most violent disturbances, excited by the intrigues of the court of Rome, and which, during all the remainder of the year 1791, rendered the unfortunate Comtat a theatre of horrors.

It may naturally be supposed that the re-union of the Comtat with France was represented at Rome in the most odious colours. But the Roman court had not waited for this provocation before they gave the most decisive proofs of their ill-will to the French. Pius's moderation

tion had cost him too violent an exertion of self-command to be of long continuance. The fear of a revolution served him at first as a pretext for persecuting the individuals of our nation. Whoever was known to be a native of France and not to profess principles contrary to those which she had adopted, was branded as a *patriot*—a name which, in the vocabulary of the Roman government, designated a man worthy of being imprisoned, banished, or at least strictly watched. That government successively passed from boldness to terror, from despotic measures to religious mummeries. In August 1791, it was alarmed by a pretended conspiracy said to be plotted by the unfortunate prisoners whom it had confined in the castle of Saint Angelo. It released them, and ordered them to be conducted out of the territory of the Ecclesiastical State.

Cagliostro's affair was connected with these suspicions and persecutions. After the shameful trial on the subject of the necklace, that famous impostor, having quitted France, and peragrated England, Holland, Switzerland, had ranged through Italy, had spent some time at Naples, and thence returned to Rome, where he had married Lorenzia Feliciani, who, under the name of Serafina, has been seen in France participating his intrigues, his adventures, and his misfortunes. It appears that she was the immediate cause of his arrest. Cagliostro gave her very harsh treatment: she contrived to escape from his tyranny; and as her husband, who was an enemy to every other worship except that of the fantastic beings which he caused to be adored by fools, had prevented her from professing her religion, the first use she made of her liberty was to go to confession. She disclosed to her ghostly director all the dangerous schemes of which she was the involuntary confidante and accomplice, and prayed him to denounce them to the government. It was in consequence of this denunciation that Cagliostro had been arrested on the twenty-eighth of December 1789, and immured in the dungeons of the inquisition. In searching his house, little money was found; but there were jewels and rich clothes, and among others, some Turkish dresses.

Hitherto

Hitherto nothing had appeared which could afford reason for treating him with rigor: but ere long, in different houses at Rome which he had hired, written proofs were discovered of a conspiracy that he had formed against the city, against the Ecclesiastical State, and against the pope himself. The tedious examination of his cause produced suspicions that he was a partisan of the "French principles." The proceedings were long and secret, and gave rise to a variety of conjectures. At length, on the sixteenth of April 1791, he received his sentence, by which he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. His wife, who, as the reward of her information, had been arrested at the same time with him, was shut up in a convent. For a while thoughts were entertained of putting him to death: but, for that purpose, it would have been necessary to have his trial prosecuted to judgment by the Holy Office, and to condemn him for the crime of *forcery*. This would have been adding ridicule to horror: and the court of Rome was afraid to put this additional weapon into the hand of philosophy, which already combated with so great advantage. He was transferred to the castle of Santo-Leone in the duchy of Urbino.

The world remained some time ignorant of the real crimes for which he was punished. His trial, however, was afterward published by piece-meal; the pope allowing this deviation from the general rule which required that such proceedings should remain buried in the most profound secrecy. The publication of his trial informed the curious inquirer that the *great crimes* of Cagliostro were his being or at least pretending to be initiated in the mystery of Egyptian free-masonry, and in those of the sect of the illuminati. To the eyes of that ignorant and fanatic court of Rome, this appeared sufficient to prove him closely connected with those principles which were at once dreaded by despotic authority and by orthodoxy.

But, in spite of all the efforts of the Holy See, they were making rapid progress: they even spread beyond the limits of France. In the beginning of the year 1791 there appeared at Venice a philosophic treatise on the  
interdict,

interdict, in which the language of the gospel was thus parodied—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the empire of reason is at hand; and the thunders of the Vatican shall not prevail against it."

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### *Injuries received by France from the Court of Rome.*

**P**IUS, however, still persisted in the neutrality which he had professed since the commencement of our troubles. Such conduct was not pleasing to the majority of the members of the Sacred College: they recommended to the holy father what they called *firmness*: they hoped thus to produce a schism in France, and to save there at least a part of the immunities of the church. A schism held out the prospect of "faithful servants opposed to rebellious sons: and was it not better to divide the family than suffer it to be entirely lost? It was, after all, only ordering the amputation of some rotten branches, for the sake of saving the trunk." The *godly* Romans relied at the same time on success in another way, and employed the arts of intrigue in France to procure it. They

They hoped that the king would set to the orthodox party an imposing example by refusing to receive the sacrament from the *sacrilegious* hands of an *infamous wretch* who had taken the oath (such were their charitable expressions). But Louis was not yet entirely led astray by his counsellors, and refused to the Sacred College the gratification of that triumph.

Soon after, a new subject arose which gave additional pain to the Roman court. One of those *infamous wretches* who had taken the oath—Gobel, the new bishop of Paris,—issued a mandate, in which, to calm (as he said) the consciences of his flock, he enumerated a list of holy bishops who had all been elected by the people. The pope was now sensibly alarmed, and mournfully said—“ I foresee it! France will escape from me!” To prevent that misfortune, he formed the resolution of punishing those refractory prelates who had set the example of revolt from the Holy See. Toward the end of April, a brief was received at Paris, signed with the name of Pius, followed by the signature of the abbé Royou, in which the former bishop of Autun was suspended from his functions, and declared excommunicate at the expiration of forty days, unless he returned to a sense of his duty. It has been asserted that an *auto-da-fe* was celebrated at Rome, at which his effigy made a conspicuous figure, clad in a *sambenito*: but this was a tale invented by some wag who wished to furnish a counterpart to what really happened at Paris, where the pope's effigy, decorated with all his pontifical robes, had been burned by the multitude in the intoxication of a fanaticism very different from that which had actuated their ancestors.

The attention of the court of Rome was engaged by more serious trifles. Although the civil constitution of the clergy now seemed to be nearly forgotten, the Holy See was zealously employed in endeavouring to cure that wound inflicted on the Roman church.

In the month of May was appointed a new congregation of thirteen cardinals and five prelates, who exerted their talents in composing a consolatory letter to the bishops, rectors, curates, who had the *godly* courage to refuse taking the constitutional oath.

In

In the midst of these transactions, the post from Turin brought intelligence of Louis's flight. This was a subject of exultation for the court of Rome: festive preparations were made to celebrate that great event: a crowd of Frenchmen set out from Rome to enrol themselves under the banners of their king now restored to liberty. Pius dispatched to the nuncio Pacca, who resided at Brussels, a letter most pathetically affectionate, in which he congratulated Louis on his deliverance, recommended him to the protection of heaven, wished him "a speedy, "peaceable, and triumphant return to his kingdom." The Roman populace hurried in a fit of enthusiasm to the palace inhabited by the French king's aunts, and rent the air with repeat shouts of "*Viva il re di Francia!*"\* The priests ran from street to street vociferating prayers for the king "delivered from the hands of his miscreant "persecutors†." Even the cardinal de Bernis himself, forgetful of his age and character, indulged in the demonstrations of puerile joy.

This delirium, however, was soon succeeded by poignant regret and even by the sting of repentance. The Roman court were sensible that they had provoked a storm of vengeance from which they could not escape; yet, instead of taking any steps to appease the French nation whose triumph could now no longer be considered as problematic, they braved her resentment, laboured to excite a schism in her bosom, and proscribed all those who concurred in her revolution.

The archbishop of Sens, whom Pius had created a cardinal, was become one of the principal objects of his animosity. The pontiff had insisted that he should either revoke his acceptance of the civil constitution of the clergy or renounce his cardinalian dignity. Lomenie had answered this injunction with a courage which was not congenial to him, but which the circumstances demanded—"Your holiness leaves me no alternative but "that of becoming a traitor to my country, or resigning

\* Long live the king of France!

† The Italian expression, *manigoldi*, literally signifies *hangmen*—*vile scoundrels*.



"ing the hat. I cannot possibly hesitate, and I send it back " to your holiness." But a voluntary resignation was not, in the eyes of the Sacred College, a punishment; and punishment was what their refractory colleague had merited. The pope therefore thought it his duty to hold a secret consistory toward the end of September 1791, and to erase the name of Lomenie from the list of cardinals. In the discourse which he pronounced on this occasion, he inveighed with great virulence against the French principles.

Thus the Roman government attracted the thunder-clouds which were to burst over their own heads; and their terror increased in the same proportion with their aversion to France, which was embittered to the highest degree, when the incorporation of the Comtat was at length voted on the eighth of October. From that moment they no longer observed any bounds either in the expressions of their hatred, or in their vexatary measures, for which the care of their own safety served as a pretext. They caused gibbets to be erected during the night at the doors of several houses, particularly that of the president of the *annona*, who was threatened by the murmurs of the populace: they exercised the most oppressive vigilance with respect to foreigners: they ordered every inn-keeper to give in a list of all the persons who lodged with him: they commanded the governors of the frontier towns to admit none who could not produce an express written order from the Holy See. They now dreamed of nothing but insurrections; and in some places, as at Orvieto and Civit -Vecchia, those dreams were on the eve of being realised. The tremendous cry of "*Viva la libert  \* !*" was there heard to resound; and a band of *sbirri* were sent to disperse the factious multitude. A certain Octavio Capelli was accused of infidelity: the Holy Office, which in ordinary times displayed much greater moderation at Rome than in any other catholic country, thought that the circumstances of the present period made severity its duty, even at the risk of incurring odium and ridicule: accordingly Capelli, as "*a visionary, an impostor, a free-mason, a man*"  
*suspected*

\* Liberty for ever !

"*suspected of heresy*," was condemned to seven years' imprisonment. Soon after, a Ragusan monk, who was held in respect at Rome and even connected with the dean of the sacred College, was suddenly arrested by that formidable tribunal: his crimes were those of being a *free-mason* and initiated in the same mysteries as Cagliostro.

During this and the following year the court of Rome accumulated the proofs of its terror, and of its enmity to the French revolution. The aunts of Louis XVI. had repaired to Rome in quest of an asylum from the persecutions to which their family and their religion stood exposed. They were received there less even as princesses than as victims. The cardinal de Bernis accommodated them in his hotel, and, by his respectful attentions, laboured to console them for the loss of that unbounded homage which they no longer received at the court of their nephew. The pope directed the princess della Santa-Croce every-where to accompany them.

They were soon followed by that courageous but impotent champion of the Roman prerogatives, the abbé Maury, who came to seek at Rome the reward of his exertions, an indemnification for his *glorious defeat*. Pius could not have treated him better in consequence of a victory: he made him the offer of an apartment in the Vatican; but the modest abbé contented himself with a lodging in the house of the cardinal secretary of state.

Scarcely arrived at Rome, he was nominated archbishop of Thebes: he was destined for an important mission and allowed a salary of sixty thousand Roman crowns. He bespoke rich liveries, and prepared to prove himself, by the display of great luxury, the worthy representative of "*the servant of the servants of God*\*." On the first of May his mission was declared: he was to repair as nuncio to the diet of Frankfort. He was consecrated archbishop of Nicæa in Saint Peter's cathedral, in presence of Louis's aunts, by the cardinal Zelada, assisted by two refractory and fugitive French bishops—those of Vence and Perpignan. The choice of such a nuncio excited

\* *Servus servorum Dei*, a title assumed by the proud humility of the popes.

excited the astonishment and indignation of all those haughty Roman prelates who saw themselves postponed to a foreign priest distinguished only by some useless talents. But the pope has so ordained: Maury is to set out for Frankfort: he will most assuredly obtain the restitution of the Comtat; for he himself has promised that he will.

It was at this epoch that the war had just b'azed forth between France and the confederate potentates. Pius, not content with giving them the aid of his orisons, seemed also to make preparations for entering the lists with them. He reviewed his troops, equally formidable by their numbers as by their valour. Let us attend him in his review.

The sovereign pontiff had at this time a company of a hundred Switzers, and one of halberdiers—two companies, the one of light horse, the other of cuirassiers, each consisting of two hundred men indifferently mounted—the city guard forming a regiment of two hundred, known by the appellation of the Red-coats—the garrison of the castle of Saint-Angelo, amounting to about a hundred—a batallion of Corsicans—the garrisons of Cività-Vecchia and Ancona, comprising about three thousand—Total of the totals, five thousand men.

It was on the strength of this army that the court of Rome began their warlike preparations, and conceived the project of forming a military line which should extend from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean. Accordingly they gave orders for the march of troops and the transportation of artillery—augmented the garrison in the castle of Saint-Angelo—sent their treasurer to Cività-Vecchia to expedite the intended armaments—directed that town to be put into a state capable of sustaining a siege—and even named a generalissimo: but where was a fit man to be found in the ecclesiastical State? They were obliged to borrow one from some of the powers at war with the common enemy. The choice first fell upon Capranica, who had been for some time in the service of the king of Sardinia—afterward upon baron Marwitz, a Prussian officer: nor was he the last.

Measures of policy are called in to the aid of those military preparatives. A secret congregation is held at the  
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house of cardinal Gerdy. The critical aspect of the times calls for some grand expedient: what decisive determination will their wisdom adopt?—That of proposing a jubilee to avert the disasters which impend over the church of Rome!

Hostilities of this kind might well have been passed over in silent disdain. The French government, however, thought proper to notice them. In the month of July, when giving to the nation an account of the dispositions of the different European powers, it announced to them that the court of Rome was also become the irreconcilable enemy of France—that it had most loudly protested against the seizure of Avignon—that, to support its claims, it had made application to all the powers, even to Russia—that it refused to admit any diplomatic agent of the republic, under what title soever—that France might already consider herself as come to an open rupture with the papacy.

But the Holy See thought no doubt, that it might, under shelter of its own feebleness, brave with impunity a power which already showed itself formidable. The insolent manifesto of the duke of Brunswick makes its appearance: it is received at Rome with enthusiastic transport: it is translated into Italian, and profusely distributed: it is considered as the signal for the annihilation of the *impious race* of Frenchmen; and persecution is exercised with increased virulence against the individuals of their nation. The French government however overlooks these new outrages with high minded disdain. Its attention is occupied by more momentous interests: it has just assumed the republican form, and is on the eve of becoming still more formidable.

About this period appeared in public a letter addressed by an anonymous writer to Pius VI. In it the pontiff was treated with extreme severity: it contained an acrimonious enumeration of his defects and his faults, and retraced the principal features of his reign. From the following passage a judgment may be formed of the style of that letter, which is rather a monument of eloquent indignation than a historic document.—“ You concur,  
“ by your contributions, in the crusade of the enemies  
“ of France. The draining of the Pontine marshes,  
“ which

“ which might have crowned you with glory, covers  
 “ you with disgrace, because it is nothing better than an  
 “ absolute robbery, since you have usurped that vast  
 “ tract, and converted it into a principality for your  
 “ nephew, to whom you have, *per fas et nefas* \*, given  
 “ an establishment equal to the opulence of some sove-  
 “ reigns. Had you not already incurred excessive guilt  
 “ in ruining your people, as well by the enormous sums  
 “ so ill expended in the insipid construction of a *sacrifice*  
 “ which will never be any thing better than a monument  
 “ of your foolish vanity and want of taste—as by the fre-  
 “ quent emission of paper-money by which you have  
 “ tripled the debts of the state ?”—In another place the  
 anonymous author reproaches him with having taken for  
 his model those fanatic popes who had elevated their  
 throne on the basis of stupid folly and ignorance, instead  
 of the prudent Benedict XIV., who above all things  
 avoided theologic disputes. He adds—“ For you, holy  
 “ father ! was reserved the task of overturning that  
 “ throne of folly to which the *most shameful vices* have  
 “ raised you, and on which you have only displayed va-  
 “ nity, ignorance, presumption, and the most greedy  
 “ nepotism. . . . . How imprudent in you, holy father !  
 “ to set yourself up as the defender of religion and mo-  
 “ rality when all the actions of your private and public  
 “ life are so many proofs of your atheism and immora-  
 “ lity !” &c.—The writer concluded by recommending  
 to him to abdicate the throne, and dictating to him the  
 language in which he ought to address the catholic world  
 in disavowing *all the follies* to which he had lent the sanc-  
 tion of his authority.

This violent philippic did not produce at Rome the ef-  
 fect which had been expected from it. The eye of ma-  
 levolence even discovered in it the marks of exaggeration:  
 its author was viewed in no other light than as one of  
 those eloquent infidels who had sworn to overturn the  
 throne and the altar: it supplied with new arguments the  
 enemies of the French revolution, and furnished an ad-  
 ditional

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\* By right and by wrong—without regard to the distinction between right and wrong.

ditional proof that men often miss their aim by overshooting the mark.

Within a short time after, the executive council came much nearer to it by speaking to the pontiff in vigorous language which was not inconsistent either with French urbanity or with truth. In the beginning of December he received from them a letter superscribed, "The executive council of the French republic, to the prince bishop of Rome." They very energetically demanded of him the enlargement of several Frenchmen who were arbitrarily confined at Rome. "Pontiff of the Roman church!" said they—"hitherto ruler of a sceptre which is ready to escape from your grasp! know the maxims of the French republic. Too just to have any thing to conceal even in diplomacy—too powerful to employ menaces—but too high-minded to overlook an outrage—she is ready to avenge it if peace-able reclamations should prove ineffectual."

But his holiness had in some respects anticipated those reclamations: even before they reached him, he had caused several French artists to be set at liberty, of whose number were Chinard an able sculptor, and Ratel. On the thirteenth of November they had been released, having recovered all their effects, even to their national cockades. But we had still several causes of complaint against the court of Rome. Some subaltern officers, natives of France, who were in the Roman service, were shaven, degraded, sent to the galleys, for having spoken favourably of their country. The cardinal of York, bishop of Frascati, had prohibited the innkeepers of his diocese to receive any Frenchman into their houses. The pulpit, the confessional, every thing was employed to exasperate the people against us. Blinded by fear and rage, despotism, as frequently is the case, exhibited itself at once in a ridiculous and an atrocious light. The pope called to Rome a body of militia to supply the place of the ordinary guard. Those militia-men, still more grotesque in their appearance than his holiness's regular troops, became a subject of laughter to the citizens: whereupon the Holy See issued strict orders that people should consider them as real soldiers, under pain of corporal punishment. Some wags, however, having, in contempt of that injunction, made

made themselves merry at the expense of the Roman militia-men, atoned for their forbidden merriment under the strokes of the rod.

The recruiting service meanwhile was prosecuted with activity; and, toward the end of December, the pontiff publicly announced, that, although he had no reason to apprehend any hostilities and intended to preserve a perfect neutrality, he felt it nevertheless his duty to provide for the security of his coasts, and to raise troops in his different provinces for the safeguard of his capital.

He did not lose sight of the necessity of providing a chief for that army which was assembling at his command. Several had already been proposed. The choice seemed for some time to be fixed on an Austrian general, by name Caprara, who, after having viewed those heroes whom he was to conduct in the path of glory, declared in plain terms, that, "at the first musket-shot, they would all run away, and leave him *tête-à-tête* with the enemy."

Such was the state of affairs, and such the temper of the public mind, when an incident, rather extraordinary than unforeseen, intervened to precipitate a catastrophe which every circumstance tended to accelerate.

For some time antecedent, the French residing in Rome had been able to discover from several indications that there existed an intention of involving them all in a general proscription: and the mildest reproach that can be brought against the Roman government, is, that it did not redouble its diligence to defeat that horrible conspiracy. At that period we had not at Rome any acknowledged agent: but our minister at Naples had sent thither one of his secretaries of legation, Basseville, to plead the cause of his oppressed compatriots. Basseville had obtained from the secretary of state an answer calculated to remove all uneasiness; and the pontiff himself had increased their unsuspecting security by some of those phrases which appear the spontaneous effusions of candor. The French were preparing to attend one of their meetings when they learned the disaster that had happened to our admiral's vessel after the expedition to Naples; and they

they made a collection among themselves to contribute to the reparation of the damages. Such was the object of their first two meetings in the palace of the academy. They were to meet a third time to deliberate on the means of substituting, in lieu of the ancient armorial insignia which decorated that palace, the arms of the republic. But the populace, misinformed respecting the object of the intended meeting, furiously crowded to the academy, where they arrived before the artists. Basseville, and Flotte, a major belonging to the fleet off Naples, were the first who had exhibited the tricolor cockade: on that very day they had worn it at a visit which they paid to the secretary of state, who said to them, "The cockade is no longer a badge which the French are prohibited to wear in Rome."

During the interval preceding the hour of the appointed meeting, these two Frenchmen were taking an airing in a coach. Basseville had with him his wife and child. Their carriage slowly moved along the *Corso*, one of the broadest and most frequented streets of Rome. The Roman government has asserted that the affected display of the tricolor cockade had irritated the populace. It was rather the government itself that had excited them to acts of violence, by so many preceding measures strongly stamped with the characters of hatred to all who were attached to France. Be that, however, as it may, the French in the coach were suddenly assailed with hooting, stones, and musket-shots. Basseville orders his coachman to drive home, springs from the carriage, opposes the efforts made by major Flotte to defend him, when suddenly he feels himself pierced with a bayonet. The soldiery, unrestrained by any control, drag him expiring to the adjacent guard-house, and seem to have given the signal for a general massacre. A crowd of wretches ravening for carnage run about the streets, vociferating "Long live the pope! The holy faith for ever! Saint Bartlemy for ever\*! Death to all the French!"

Meantime

\* The massacre of the protestants in France on Saint Bartholomew's day, A. D. 1572, will naturally recur to the mind of the reader.



Meantime the pupil-pensioners of the academy ran terrified through the halls, and saw themselves in danger of being murdered amid the master-productions of the arts.

Several facts deeply inculcate the Roman government. Some statements, which are at least of questionable authority, tend to exculpate it, by throwing the provocation on the side of the French. If we were disposed to anticipate the decision of history, to which alone it belongs to pronounce between these contradictory assertions at a period when the passions shall be lulled to silence, we would say that Rome—at this time crowded with malcontents of various descriptions, but all unanimous in detesting the French revolution, all faithfully perseverant in that detestation which they considered as a duty—must have contained, if not numerous accomplices, at least numerous confidants, of that horrible conspiracy to which the unfortunate Bassville fell a victim; that the government could not be ignorant of it; that, as it did not prevent its execution, it may fairly be accused of having at least connived at it; and that this suspicion derives confirmation from the style of the edict issued three days after by the pope: for, instead of making a disavowal in the most decisive language and in that hypocritically mournful tone which Italian duplicity must have found it easy to assume, he contented himself with saying, through the organ of his secretary of state Zelada, that he “sensibly felt the testimonies which the  
 “people of Rome had given him, on the preceding days,  
 “of their attachment to religion and their affection for  
 “his holiness’s person; but that the holy father was  
 “afflicted to see that the same people, amid the emotions to which they had yielded in expressing their sentiments, had suffered themselves to be hurried on to  
 “*some excesses which had disturbed the public tranquillity—*  
 “excesses unbecoming a nation who ought to pride  
 “themselves on having been nurtured with good precepts, and trained up in the principles of a morality  
 “whose every maxim recommends peace, gentleness,  
 “and charity toward our neighbour.”—In another part, his holiness commands his subjects “to keep themselves  
 “in future in *a more calm state*—to refrain from all kind  
 “of

“ of tumult or assemblage—to do *no damage to any hotel*  
 “ *or any shop*—and not to *insult* any person, of whatsoe-  
 “ ver origin or country, or any property belonging to  
 “ him,” &c.

And it was in this soft and tenderly indulgent language that the court of Rome expressed their disapprobation of a horrible crime committed against a French agent who had been received by their principal minister a few hours before! Was it thus that they hoped to disarm the resentment of the formidable republic which at that time made successful opposition to a great part of Europe, and already threatened the most firmly established thrones?

If any thing could appear more astonishing than the phlegmatic unconcern of the court of Rome on such an occasion, it was the patience of the French government which condescended to rest satisfied with such a cold disavowal, and whose anger was appeased by some slight marks of repentance.

But the indignation which must have fired the bosom of every Frenchman—of every impartial observer, if there were any such at the time—is at least energetically expressed in an anonymous letter addressed from Florence to the cardinal Zelada, and dated January 25. By it we are informed that “ his eminence Zelada, a man of  
 “ such reputed mildness and conciliating disposition, was  
 “ at this critical moment when the lives of all the French  
 “ seemed to be in danger, seated by the pope’s side,  
 “ calmly entertaining him with the successive details of  
 “ the shocking scene which the populace were acting  
 “ in the streets of Rome. Ah! cardinal Zelada, what  
 “ is become of that reputation for prudence, ability, and  
 “ humanity, of which you had been twenty years in  
 “ possession, and which caused you to be beloved by the  
 “ ministers of France and Spain, courted by all foreign-  
 “ ers, and held in estimation through all Europe?  
 “ What! you compel us then to consider that brilliant  
 “ reputation as one of the usurpations of the court of  
 “ Rome, and to view you no longer as that able minister  
 “ whom the world was pleased to think you, but as a  
 “ detected hypocrite whose conduct inspires almost as  
 “ much contempt as aversion?”

To

To account, however, for that cool apathy of the Roman government after an event that might have caused its instant overthrow, it is only necessary to recollect that our government, though plumed with glorious successes, might still appear to stand on dubious ground; that the Holy See had as a rampart, to shelter it from our resentment, a great part of Italy—of that country which was still thought inaccessible to our arms; and especially that it was surrounded by perfidious counsellors, who, making heaven a party in the defence of their purely mundane interests; talked of nothing but *celestial vengeance*, from which it was impossible for the *impious, sacrilegious, regicide* nation to escape.

The pontiff, however, did not place such blind reliance on these great motives of security as not to adopt other precautions. He consigned to oblivion his grounds of complaint against the court of Naples, and, in concert with it, planned measures of defence. He visited his arsenals and his pawn-bank\*, to appreciate the assistance which he might expect from those two grand sinews of war, steel and gold. Alas! they were both very feeble: no cannons in the arsenals, little gold in the coffers! But his principal resource was the fanaticism of the Roman populace; and he spared no pains to render it subservient to his views. At this time he carried on intrigues in all the courts of Italy, and, setting aside the scruples of intolerance, was in concert with that of Saint-James's against the *common enemy of the peace of Europe*. Those two courts of Rome and London seemed to have divided heaven and earth between them; the one reserving to itself the religious resources, the other the political.

Pius filled to the best of his power his double character of temporal prince and pontiff: and, foreseeing that the vengeance of France could be at most only procrastinated, he called forth, by energetic proclamations, all his means of defence. “At the sound of the bell,” said he in one of them, “which shall announce an invasion, let all  
“ the

\* *Monte-di-pietà*—pawn broker's office, only on a more extensive scale than ours, and with this further difference, that the government, i. e. his holiness, was the head pawn-broker. See Chap. XXXI. toward the end of this volume.

“ the men run to arms ; let them send off to the interior  
 “ of the country all the cattle and forage ; let them set  
 “ fire to whatever else remains ; and let them *endeavour*  
 “ *to destroy by every practicable mean a lawless and merciless*  
 “ *enemy.*”—Such were the expressions used by the  
 father of the faithful, the vice-gerent of the God of  
 mercy !

He contented himself however with exhorting and  
 inviting, because he was convinced, he said, that all his  
 subjects, equally good catholics as good citizens, would  
 consider it as their duty to combat a horde of “ *barbarians*  
 “ who had sworn to overturn, wherever they went, the  
 “ throne and the altar.”—He next promised indemnifica-  
 tions for losses, rewards for distinguished actions, and  
 particularly a complete amnesty to criminals who should  
 step forward *to expiate their crimes by fighting in defence of*  
*the state and of religion.* From this *levy en masse*, thus call-  
 ed forth in the name of heaven and earth, he excepted  
 none but old men above the age of sixty years, children  
 below that of sixteen, infirm persons, and ecclesiastics in  
 general, whose function it was to “ raise their hands on  
 “ the mountain while the faithful were combating in  
 “ the plain.”

This extraordinary proclamation would alone have  
 been sufficient to justify the measures which were at  
 length taken against the court of Rome, and even against  
 the catholic church. How was it possible any longer to  
 acknowledge, as the prevailing religion in a state, that  
 religion of which the sovereign pontiff, with his sacred  
 book in his hand, dares proclaim to the universe that it  
 is necessary to destroy an enemy *by every practicable mean*  
 —encourages to the commission of crimes by the facility  
 of expiation, in absolving all criminals who shall step  
 forth to “ fight in defence of the state and of religion”—  
 and sanctions the slothful idleness of the priests by destin-  
 ing them to remain inactive spectators of those combats  
 in which they impel their flock to engage, and which  
 are undertaken for their own defence ? In the age of the  
 crusades,

crusades, in that of the league\*, did fanaticism ever speak in language more absurd or more intolerant?

The emperor also was one of the principal supporters of Pius, who received from him counsels, eulogiums, encouragements, and who with godly tranquillity beheld the English and Spanish fleets protecting Italy from invasion. But the successes of the coalition were neither constant nor universal: the Piémontese army had suffered repeated checks; and it was still necessary to observe some delicacy of conduct toward France. Instead, therefore, of braving the republic, the pontiff, toward the end of June, ordered the restoration of a French tartane which had been captured by one of his *guardacostas*, and carried to Cività-Vecchia: for he was "not," he said, "at war with France." By what epithet shall we characterise that pontiff who dares to assert that he is "not at war with France," yet invites his subjects to destroy all the French "by every practicable mean," and labours in every court of Europe to excite enemies against them?

But a circumstance which more strongly operated than his salutary dread of France in rendering him still cautious, was the feebleness of his resources. Of this he every day gained fresh conviction. Toward the conclusion of the year 1793 the taxes were burdensome and ill paid: provisions were scarce and dear: the people vented loud murmurs on seeing them embarked and sent off to supply the fleets of the confederate powers. Two months after necessity compelled the adoption of a measure which at any other time would have been deemed more than bold. The new treasurer, Laporta, who had succeeded the squanderer Ruffo, put in requisition the plate belonging to the churches, for the purpose of devoting it to the mintage of ten millions of small coin, intended to be employed in paying off the *cedole*.

Pius eagerly laid hold on every circumstance which afforded him an opportunity of displaying his zeal. In the first months of the year 1794, success seemed to smile on the Austrian arms. The emperor had conceived the  
idea

\* The catholic league, formed against the hugonots, in the reign of Henry III. of France.

idea of placing himself, at least during a while, at the head of his army. Such a glorious instance of self-devotion appeared to Pius deserving of encouragement and even of recompense: accordingly he sent to Francis II. a golden medal representing Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and inclosed in a relique-case. "Fight," said he to him, in a letter which accompanied the present—"fight in the name of those two valiant soldiers of Christ." The exhortation reached the emperor probably after his precipitate retreat: it was disapproved even at Rome: but the pope had contracted the habit of committing actions which alternately exposed him to ridicule and resentment; nor shall we see an end of such conduct until the hour of his downfall.

The remainder of the year 1794 was spent in devising means to procure a supply of specie, and means to fanaticise the multitude. The former proved a more difficult task than the latter. To carry on his military preparatives, an increased expenditure became necessary, and, consequently, an augmentation of taxes. The Roman people now, instead of rising against the French, were near rising against their own government; and, at the termination of the year 1794, attempted to set fire to the palace of the duke Braschi, whose riches excited indignation amid the general distress.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER XXVII.

*Embarrassments and Inconsistencies of the Court of Rome.*

**V**ARIOUS circumstances at this time concurred in irritating the minds of the Romans. During the three preceding years, the pope had thought proper to prohibit the diversions of the carnival, in consideration of the calamities of the church. The lower orders alone suffered by this prohibition: the nobles alone diverted themselves; the law being mute with respect to the latter. The impatient inhabitants of the *Trastevere* quarter and of the *Porta del Popolo*, shocked at that exclusive privilege, resolved to have their share also in the diversions of the season. On the Thursday before lent (of the year 1795) they ran about the streets in masks. On the following Monday the patrols attempted by violence to repress those sallies of coarse but innocent gaiety: the consequence was an open insurrection, in which stilettoes and knives were employed to second the volleys of stones. The Borghese palace was besieged: but a few handfuls of coin dispersed the besiegers. The duke Braschi was involved in similar danger: his wife, confined by sickness to her bed, was near losing her life in consequence

consequence of the fright. The Piombini and Chigi palaces were preserved by barricadoes.

Private individuals were the only sufferers by this commotion: they were pillaged: they were obliged to pay ransoms. The terror was general throughout Rome: and many foreigners fled from the city. The government remained a passive spectator of the storm in hope that it would prove no more than a transient gust. They did not discover in a few bands of plunderers the elements of a serious insurrection. The Romans at this time did not resemble those of their ancestors who, seceding to the Sacred Mount, compelled the senate to pay deference to their wishes—and much less those Frenchmen of the fourteenth of July who in a single day shook the foundations of their ancient government. On this occasion (and it was perhaps the only instance of his prudent management during ten years) the pope applied to the evil its true remedy. He did not consider this mutinous fit as indicative of a settled wish for liberty. But, when the danger was past, he adopted indeed a measure which might well have been thought ridiculous. Sufficient respect had not been paid to his agents: he therefore thought proper to declare the papal soldiers *inviolable* as their master, and to announce that any insult offered to a *sbirro* would be deemed an act of *high treason*.

In the course of the year 1795, which was so favourable to our arms, the pope did every thing in his power to avoid coming to a rupture with us, and even took some steps, which, at the same time that they afforded glaring evidence of his terror, served well enough to conceal his aversion. In July he learned that a French brigantine, chased by two Neapolitan tartanes, had been driven ashore on the coast of the Ecclesiastical State, and that its hapless crew, escaped from shipwreck and captivity, were roaming in the woods near the sea-side and in the utmost distress. His pontifical bowels yearned: he sent assistance to those unfortunates, caused their vessel to be repaired, and convoyed by an escort to a certain distance. On this occasion he declared that he was at war with nobody, that he was desirous of living in peace, and did not wish to injure any nation.

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A singular circumstance was, that, even while he was causing public prayers to be offered up for the success of the imperial armies, and lavishing on them his plenary indulgences, he treated the subjects of Austria with greater severity than he exercised against the French. During the year 1795 he detained in prison two chaplains of the court of Vienna, Monaco and Poli, on the charge of being attached to the opinions of the bishop of Pistoja. This, truly, was a fit moment to think of those puerile discussions, which at most were only worthy of the attention of the church in her hours of peaceful leisure !

The court of Rome had now precisely reached the period of its greatest internal embarrassments. Specie, provisions, confidence in the government, all was deficient at the same time. To palliate one disease which was already deemed incurable, they increased another of more dangerous complexion—the discontent of the people. A new emission of *cedole* was made, which were not exchangeable for cash in any sums above five crowns. The venders of provisions were obliged, at the close of each week, to carry to the bank *dello Spirito Santo* a part of the specie which they had received, and to accept *cedole* in exchange for it : most of the convents were invited to send their superfluous plate to the mint : but all these resources proved yet insufficient ; and so urgent was the distress of the papal treasury toward the end of December, that the pope consented to sell a great number of his carriages, and forty of his finest horses. The sum of sixty thousand crowns which he raised by the sale was quickly sent to the pawn-bank and the bank *dello Spirito Santo*, which were crowded with people importunately pressing for the exchange of their *cedole*.

The immediate cause of this increased distress lay in the military preparations which the court of Rome had the boldness to make for the purpose of repelling an attack which their own extraordinary conduct had provoked. In April 1796, at the moment when they seemed desirous of deprecating the storm which already began to growl over their heads, a body of Neapolitan cavalry presented themselves on the frontier, wishing to pass through the Ecclesiastical State on their way to the Milanese. What did his holiness now do to prove his neutrality ? He appointed

appointed a commandant, who was directed to accompany the Neapolitans, and insure to them a supply of provisions.

This instance of partiality was not calculated to conciliate the good-will of a victorious general, who was already master of Lombardy, and who, stationed at Milan as the centre of his present and future conquests, threatened all Italy, and particularly the papal territory. The court of Rome had not imagined that his successes would be durable; and, according as they had appeared certain or doubtful, the pope had alternately behaved with suppleness or arrogance. In the spring of 1796 he plainly perceived that his position was uncommonly critical: but to whom should he have recourse for its melioration? The cardinal de Bernis, formerly his counsellor and mediator, was himself no longer in that calm situation which might enable him to give prudent advice: he was besides, on more than one account, odious to that government whose anger was to be averted. The Spanish minister alone remained in such an attitude as could render his intervention useful: his court, after a transient war, was again on terms of amity with the French republic: his character, his knowledge, his long experience, the stately magnificence by which he was surrounded, the figure that Spain had constantly made among the catholic powers, had raised him to be the man of greatest consequence in all Rome. The Spanish palace and its extensive appurtenances constituted in that city a kind of independent state, whose chief saw under his protection and guidance a population of fourteen thousand souls, enjoyed his immunities which no hand would have dared to violate, and had his guards and even his gentlemen. The greatest personages, the cardinals, courted his favour: those who bore him no affection were nevertheless afraid to refuse him the outward marks of esteem and respect; and, where every other sentiment was wanting, at least he commanded fear. Such was the man, whom—not every heart invited, but every eye looked up to, when they saw the Ecclesiastical State threatened with invasion by the victorious Buonaparte.

The cardinal Zelada had not long been in office before he perceived his own impotence. He felt himself extremely

tremely inadequate to the task which Pius had thought he might venture to intrust to him. Destitute of activity, and possessing hardly any influence, he was no better than a mere ostensible tool in all those measures of which the French government had reason to complain. The court of Rome, justly alarmed by the progress of a revolution which attacked prejudices of every kind, thought it necessary to oppose a barrier to that torrent. The ordinary means were insufficient. Zelada, characteristically feeble, and whose faculties were still farther enfeebled by age, was ill qualified singly to guide the reins of government in so critical circumstances. The pontiff committed them to the hands of a congregation composed of some cardinals, as Albani, Gerdyl, Antonelli, Borgia, Zelada himself, together with some prelates, and appointed as their *fiscal*, that is to say their principal agent, a criminalist named Barberi, a just man, it was said, but severe and violent, who, by his excesses, contributed not a little to accelerate the downfall of the Roman government. It was through him alone that the pope held correspondence with the congregation, all whose reports Barberi distorted in obedience to the dictates of his own passions. He thus engrossed all the authority which ought to have been vested in the congregation: he exercised acts of personal vengeance: he subserved every suspicion: he let loose every hatred; and, while he continued to disgust Romans and foreigners, the friends and the enemies of France, the pontiff alone considered himself as indebted to him for his own salvation and that of the state. Every individual bowed submissive, every tongue was silent, at least in his presence.

Notwithstanding the clamours of the factions opposed to France, the chevalier Azara still retained not only some ascendancy over the pope, but also the confidence of the Roman people. He condescended to make one last effort to extricate the Holy See from the danger in which a succession of imprudencies had involved it. He consented to become its mediator with the youthful conqueror who menaced its territories, and repaired to Buonaparte at Milan. All Rome in anxious expectation awaited the result of his conferences with that general. The populace loudly expressed their wishes for the

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preservation of peace : they assembled in crowds before the door of duke Braschi, whom they suspected of entertaining a desire different from theirs ; nor could they otherwise be appeased than by assurances that the duke-nephew had on the contrary determined his uncle to commence a negotiation.

But the progress of the conferences was much less rapid than that of our arms. Intelligence was received at Rome, that on the first of Messidor (June 19, 1796), a division of the French army had entered the papal dominions. On the frontier of the Bolognese and Modenese territories stood the fort of Urbino, which we could not leave in our rear. It was summoned to surrender. This fort was garrisoned by five hundred soldiers, " fine-looking fellows," said Buonaparte in his relation of the affair, " and well clad : but they were pope's-men ! " The fort surrendered. This was our first conquest in the Ecclesiastical State. Soon after, we became masters of Bologna, Ferrara, and even Ancona. Thus the Holy See lost, within a few days, two of its legatine governments, its two finest provinces, which it has never since recovered, and where no individual has regretted its yoke.

The news of these events caused a great ferment among the Romans. They assembled in groups which displayed the features of anxiety rather than of sedition. The government, however, was alarmed by these appearances : the secretary of state addressed a proclamation to the mal-contented, and spoke to them in the language both of the temporal and spiritual powers, which stood in need of mutual support to succeed in still retaining any authority. " As Christians," said he to them, " have recourse to God : as subjects, place confidence " in your sovereign, who leaves nothing unattempted to " secure peace."

About this time the priests of the Ecclesiastical State crowded to the temples, to the public squares—opened to their flocks the treasures of celestial liberality—promised *forty thousand years of indulgence* to whoever should  
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assist in repelling the French, "the scourges of the church\*."

The general anxiety, however, continued to operate with undiminished poignancy. Already the principal Roman families were seen retiring from the city. The cardinals were preparing to follow them, when a courier arrived, who had been dispatched from Bologna by the chevalier Azara, with the news of the armistice which he had just concluded. The sacrifices which he had been obliged to make were painful: it cost the pope the two legatine governments of Bologna and Ferrara, his finest paintings, his most beautiful statues, and a contribution of fifteen millions: but these were the only terms on which he had been able to arrest the tide of Gallic conquest.

This armistice supplied the enemies of the chevalier Azara with new means of bringing him into discredit, and even rendering him odious. According to their representations, that minister "had sacrificed the Holy See: his conduct was dictated by his hatred of the Romans, and by his irreligious principles, evidently similar to those which the French arms rendered triumphant."—But this was not a season for declamatory invective: it was necessary to devise means of fulfilling the condition of the fatal armistice. The pope immediately sent for the cardinal *camerlingo* and the governor of Rome: he convoked the congregation of state: he deliberated: he resigned himself to his destiny, and in the night of the 28th of June dispatched a plenipotentiary to Paris. The person chosen for that mission was Pieracchi, who had already been internuncio in France; and with him was associated Evangelisti, whom the cheva-

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\* Thus they commented on a brief issued by the pope, which had been profusely disseminated through the country, and which is worthy of being preserved, as one of the most curious monuments of atrocious fanaticism. It is as follows:

"To all our dearly-beloved catholic sons, brethren in Jesus Christ.

"We pray you, for the good of Christianity and of his holiness, to take up arms in defence of religion. Whoever shall kill a Frenchman, will perform a sacrifice acceptable to God; and his name shall be inscribed among the names of the elect of the Lord."

See the "Political and Military Memoirs, illustrative of the Secret History of the French Revolution," vol. ii. page 109.

lier Azara had taken with him to Bologna as his secretary.

These political steps were followed by public prayers, thanksgivings, and proclamations: but the chief difficulty was not yet surmounted. The contribution promised to France must be raised without delay. The ordinary resources were exhausted nor could taxation furnish new. Pius proposed in a secret consistory to take the remainder of those sums of money which had been treasured in the castle of Saint-Angelo since the pontificate of Sixtus V. On any other occasion such a measure would have been deemed sacrilege: under present circumstances, the terror was now so profound and universal that the pope's proposition was unanimously adopted.

But those treasures of the castle of Saint-Angelo were hardly sufficient to pay the first instalment: for the subsequent payments it became necessary to employ other means. The churches and all the pious foundations were obliged to deliver up all their ornaments and vessels of gold and silver which were not absolutely indispensable for the celebration of divine service. An edict was issued, inviting all the pope's subjects to carry to the treasury all their superfluous plate. Four Roman noblemen were charged with the collection. The prince Doria sent in a gratuitous donation which was valued at half a million.

To divert the minds of the Romans from brooding on those subjects of anxious concern, prayers were called in to their aid, and indulgences, and miracles in particular, which seemed to be multiplied in these critical moments. At Ancona, notwithstanding the presence of the French who were so little inclined to superstitious credulity, there was not a Madonna that had not exhibited symptoms of animation; and the faithful were firmly persuaded that to the intercession of the Virgin alone they were indebted for that armistice which cost them so dear, and yet was so earnestly desired. At Rome, as it was highly proper, the miracles were even more brilliant than at Ancona. There, all the Madonnas opened and shut and rolled their eyes: near some of them, withered flowers recovered their bloom, dry branches resumed their verdure; and

and the multitude flocked in crowds to the sight, admired, and attested what they had seen.

It was amid this phrensy of devotion that the chevalier Azara entered Rome on his return from Bologna. Notwithstanding the instigations of the chevalier's enemies, the pontiff received him with eager warmth, gave him several secret audiences, and received from him counsels of which subsequent events have proved that he had not the wisdom to avail himself. Pius's intellects were at this time in a state nearly bordering on alienation: but there was something gloomy in his delirium. Those miracles, which by all his flock were considered as so auspicious omens, to him appeared sure tokens of the divine wrath: to appease it, he ordered visits, in the form of processions, to six churches. In those religious ceremonies, ladies of the highest rank bore the sacred banner; and the cardinal della Sommaglia, well fitted by his natural cast as by his station for acting every sort of character, did not disdain the task of carrying the cross.

Such was the manner in which the court of Rome was preparing to receive the French commissioners who were coming to execute the conditions of the armistice. The cardinal Zelada thought it his duty to testify the warmest desire of giving them a good reception: and although it was well known what he thought of the situation of the Holy See, he had the effrontery to declare in a hypocritic proclamation, that the armistice was "an effect of God's mercy, since it was, after all, an advantage to sacrifice a part for the sake of preserving the rest." He moreover threatened with the severest punishments whoever should dare to offer even the slightest insult to the French commissioners or any of their suit. By this conduct the court of Rome announced very pacific intentions, but at the same time betrayed considerable distrust of the dispositions of the Roman people, and seemed to prepare for itself an apology beforehand.

In the month of July, arrived the first of the expected commissioners, citizen Miot, our minister in Tuscany. The chevalier Azara, who after having transacted the affairs of the court of Rome, now did the honours for it,  
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went to meet the Gallic commissioner as far as Ponte-Molle, and introduced him into Rome under the escort of a piquet of cavalry, and preceded by a French courier decorated with that tricolor cockade which a few months before, had so violently excited the indignation of the Roman people.

Miot was at first received with all the appearances of warm cordiality, and distinguished by those honours which are usually reserved for ambassadors extraordinary. All the cardinals, so well schooled in the arts of dissimulation, came to visit him. The chevalier Azara procured him an audience of the pope, which lasted nearly an hour: the conversation wholly turned on indifferent topics, nor was any except transient mention made of the conditions of the armistice. Pius solemnly declared that they were, in his eyes, "*una cosa sacrosanta* \*:" but experience soon taught us what degree of sincerity accompanied those words pronounced with a penitential air. Afterward, for form-sake, Miot had a conference with the cardinal Zelada. The latter was so enfeebled by age and sollicitude as hardly to retain the use of speech: he therefore nominated a prelate to supply his place in the conferences relative to the armistice.

The other French commissioners successively arrived. Their presence caused a lively sensation at Rome: they were viewed with an eager curiosity which had nothing offensive in it. They naturally awakened unpleasant recollections: but what comparison between a set of pacific commissioners—for the most part men of temperate prudence—and those formidable conquerors from whom the city ought to have deemed herself thrice happy to have only received laws at a distance? Cacault, who had so long been employed in Italy, closely followed Miot to Rome; and, at the end of July, the conferences respecting the execution of the armistice were begun in the chevalier Azara's hotel. At those meetings the pope employed, as his interpreter, the *fiscal* Barberi, whose intractable disposition was already too well known. He still possessed paramount influence, and exerted it in such manner

\* A most sacred object.



manner as to increase the number of wrongs chargeable on the pope. They had not yet reached the term of their final completion.

At this period we received a slight check, and were obliged to relinquish for some time the siege of Mantua. Pius's perfidious counsellors saw that this was a favourable moment to repair at least a part of his losses; and, notwithstanding the energetic representations of the chevalier Azara, the pontiff dispatched a vice-legate to retake possession of the legation of Ferrara. This little triumph was of short duration. The vice-legate, on his arrival, found the Ferrarese tolerably quiet, and imagined that they were disposed to replace themselves with pleasure under the papal yoke: but he saw them rise in insurrection when he attempted to substitute the arms of the sovereign pontiff to those of the French republic. Soon afterward the tide of Gallic victory resumed its wonted course: the vice-legate's mission was at an end; and he thought himself very fortunate in being allowed to return to Rome.

Meantime the respectful attentions which had in the first instance been shown to the French commissioners were succeeded by insults as soon as our situation began to appear critical. Miot, returning to his post at Florence after a month spent at Rome, became the object of a popular commotion in his way through Spoleto; nor did he without difficulty escape the rage of the populace who were stirred up against him. Even at Rome, two of our commissioners, who had quietly stopped to view the column of Trajan, were first assailed with a volley of stones thrown by children, and afterward, in attempting to make their escape, heard the alarming cry of "Kill them! they are Frenchmen! they are commissioners!" In fact they were in imminent danger of losing their lives; and, for their preservation, they were solely indebted to the interference of a Roman officer who conducted them to the governor of the city. The latter stammered out an apology in the following hypocritic strain—"You must attribute this commotion, which we disavow and regret, to the unfavourable intelligence received concerning the French armies."—"And what would you say," replied one of the commissaries, "if—now that  
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“ we have victories to celebrate instead of losses to deplore—we should dispense with our observance of the armistice?”—The governor promised to exert increased vigilance; the commissioners were conducted to their habitation, but not without hearing on every side of them the loud hootings of the populace.

On the second day after this event, notwithstanding the promises of the government, notwithstanding the numerous patrols, some Frenchmen were again insulted. Cacault lost all patience, and was on the point of suffering his indignation to break forth; but he was appeased by the chevalier Azara, who promised to obtain for him complete satisfaction from his holiness. Pius wore the appearance of astonishment, of affliction: he issued fresh orders: he commanded guards to be placed within reach of the French plenipotentiary. Some delinquents were arrested; and assurances were given that they should be punished.

It was these scandalous scenes that finally determined the cardinal Zelada in the intention which he had long formed of retiring from office. He was very old and infirm, and saw himself responsible for disagreeable incidents which he had not the power to prevent. The entire government of Rome rested at this time on the internal police, which was nominally intrusted to the congregation heretofore mentioned, but in fact was entirely surrendered to the *fiscal* Barberi, who was now become the object of universal detestation. On the eleventh of August the chevalier Azara wrote to the pope that the public interest demanded the dismissal of the *fiscal*, as the only mean of keeping the people within bounds, and appeasing the French republic, whose resentment might be productive of the most disagreeable consequences to the Ecclesiastical State.

But Pius could not consent to part with Barberi. He thought the views of the Spanish minister were equally answered by substituting in Zelada's stead a cardinal toward whom Azara appeared to be very favourably disposed, and who was reputed to possess both prudence and energy. He informed the chevalier that he had appointed to the ministry the cardinal Ignatius Busca.

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Since this new minister may be considered as the immediate cause of the final calamities of the Holy See, he deserves to be more particularly known.

The prelate Busca, sprung from an illustrious family in the Milanese, was gifted with some external accomplishments: to tallness of stature and elegance of figure he added that manner which announced an acquaintance with polite life, and language sufficiently florid to disguise the mediocrity of his mental endowments.

He had travelled in his youth, and, after having peragrated France and Germany, had been nominated to the post of nuncio at Brussels. This was not one of those nunciatures which directly led to the cardinalate. On his return, Busca was appointed governor of Rome. In addition to zeal and steadiness, that post required considerable abilities. Busca endeavoured to distinguish himself in it by his reforms: but he was completely the man of pleasure; he soon relinquished a task which was rendered too laborious by the contrarieties he had to encounter: and, on quitting the governorship of Rome to put on the cardinal's hat, he humorously enough observed, that the only obligation which the Romans had consented to owe him, was that of having taught them "the use of ice-punch."

This speech was characteristic of him in a two-fold light—as a sensualist and as a man of humour. Those two qualities—which, whether good or bad, are pretty generally associated with frankness—concealed in the cardinal dissimulation sufficiently profound to mislead even the chevalier Azara in forming his opinion of him. Busca perceived that this minister was the only man in Rome who preserved the coolness of sober judgment amid the most violent tempests—the only one in whom the pope continued to place any confidence, and by whose aid "a man of talents, such as *he* was," could hope to act a conspicuous part. He attached himself to his company: he assiduously frequented the circle of the princess della Santa-Croce, which had long been the habitual rendezvous of the foreign ministers, especially those of France and Spain. That lady was essentially kind, easy, obliging. The cardinal Busca succeeded in his efforts

efforts to please her: he often saw at her house the chevalier Azara, and gave him testimonies of confidence, affection, deference. A close intimacy took place between them; and the chevalier Azara, whom on other occasions it was not easy to deceive, fancied he saw in him not only a friend, but also a man of amiable disposition, refined understanding, and conciliating manner,—such, in short, as the pope could desire for his minister in the critical circumstances by which he was surrounded.

The cardinal Zelada was disgusted with the ministry, and had given more than sufficient proofs of his incapacity. Nothing more than the slightest hint was necessary to induce him to retire. The Spanish minister, who poised in his hand the destiny of Rome, was perfectly sure of being able to influence the pontiff in his choice of a new secretary of state. Our agent in Rome at this time was Cacault, who had for many years been employed in political missions in Italy, where he had won the general esteem. Cacault frequently saw the cardinal Busca, and had conceived of him as favourable an opinion as that entertained by the chevalier Azara. They both seemed to have forgotten a scene which had proved that those forms of urbanity which the cardinal well knew how to assume, were a cloak under which lurked considerable violence and rudeness of passion. At table at the house of the princess della Santa-Croce, one of the guests, who excited his jealousy, having indulged in some poignant sallies, Busca dashed his plate in his rival's face. He would not have escaped a severe retaliation, if the princess had not interposed her conciliatory influence to separate the two champions. Through respect for her, the quarrel was appeased, and the amiable cardinal was pardoned that “momentary start of *vacuity*.”

This adventure was nearly forgotten when Busca was proposed to the pontiff by the Spanish minister to fill the post of Secretary of state—that is to say, was appointed. The chevalier Azara soon had reason to reckon him among the number of those who requited his favours by ingratitude, and Rome had equal cause to account him one of her most dangerous ministers.

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Of the different factions which agitated Rome and oppressed the feeble pontiff with a load of heavy anxieties, the most active was that of the Albani, which was, on more than one account, devoted to the house of Austria. The cardinal of that name, as dean of the Sacred College, and by his birth a member of almost all the congregations, had great influence on the determinations of the Holy See. One of his nephews was nuncio at Vienna; another was employed about the person of the archduke Ferdinand, governor-general of Lombardy. Thus the whole family were, by the ties of interest, attached to the court of Vienna. They and all their adherents, the fanatics, the partisans of the English and Neapolitans, vented murmurs of indignation at the bare sound of our successes in Italy, and exerted their utmost efforts to drag the court of Rome into the coalition of confederate Europe; not, however, on a presumption that Pius could, as a temporal potentate, throw any great weight into the scale; but because they knew that the Holy See still retained a powerful empire over the consciences of a part of Europe, and that, in the eyes of those faithful sons of the church, a cause became sanctified by the adherence of the sovereign pontiff.

The various enemies of France, then employed at Rome all the machinations of intrigue, at one time to depreciate our victories, at another to predict our disasters, and on every occasion to defame both the principles of the French revolution and the men who laboured to establish it. The moment our successes appeared doubtful, those intriguers inflamed the mind of government, urged the military preparations, and recommended measures of oppression. Did we gain any advantages? they immediately receded: and the court of Rome, obedient to their impulse, spoke in the language of conciliation, and adopted some steps tending to prove its pacific disposition.

At this period the Neapolitans were preparing to send assistance to Austria; an object which they could not accomplish without marching their troops through the territories of the Ecclesiastical State. Already they had advanced a body of three thousand men to Ponte-Corvo, under pretence of preventing desertion. This circumstance

stance was an additional cause of embarrassment to the court of Rome, who saw that they must repel, as a band of invaders, those troops whose presence they could not but secretly desire for their own defence. Cacault, in a written memorial, declared to the cardinal secretary of state, that, if the Neapolitans entered the Roman territory, his government would consider the armistice as broken. This menacing notice was communicated to the court of Naples; and on the answer of that court was now to depend the alternative of peace or war.

The court of Rome were already involved in considerable perplexity, when they received a courier from Paris. His dispatches related to the negotiation which was about to be commenced at Florence in consequence of the armistice. The demands of the French government were peremptory. The hour of conquest was not yet come; but the season of delicacy was already past. We demanded as a preliminary step, a declaration by the pope, setting forth, that, whereas certain common enemies had surreptitiously obtained from his piety certain briefs which, in their principles and their effects, were contrary to the rights of nations, he “disapproved and annulled them.” The injunction was severe: that the *infallible* pontiff should, to the face of the universe, acknowledge himself to have been *mistaken*! should accuse his friends! should renounce them! But the danger was urgent, and called for a speedy determination. Pius assembled a congregation more numerous than any of the preceding, and composed of all the most enlightened members of the Sacred College. These were the dean Albani, Zelada, Gerdyl, Busca, Antici, della Sommaglia, Antonelli, all cardinals of whom we have already spoken—Caraffa, a man of talents, but intriguing, dangerous, and avowedly hostile to the French—Rovella, one of those whose pleasing manner had recommended them to the pope, and who with suavity of disposition united a mind tolerably well cultivated—Altieri, prudent and moderate even to timidity—Carandini, not deficient either in address or capacity, but devoured by secret ambition, and universally hated and feared, &c.,

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Even before this Areopagus had declared its opinion, Pius had again recourse to the interposition of the chevalier Azara to dissipate the storm which was gathering against him at Florence. But the apparent homage, thus paid to his capacity, was only a mean employed by his enemies to remove him out of the way. He soon perceived that such had been their view: for hardly had he set out on his mission when the sapient congregation pronounced in the most strongly negative terms on the pretensions of the Gallic government. In particular, the two oracles of the Roman theology, Gerdyl and Antonelli, displayed all their eloquence and erudition to prove that the church was undone if her chief incurred the criminal baseness of making the retrograde step which was required of him. His briefs, they maintained, were conformable to the decisions of the councils, the opinions of the holy fathers, &c.; and by a retraction of them he would sanction all the in-roads made during the last seven years upon the rights of the church.

In dictating this decision, the spirit of fanaticism had perhaps less influence than the spirit of party—that is to say, of that Austrian faction which had thrown aside the mask since the departure of the chevalier Azara, and under whose banner the new secretary of state had enrolled himself. The great negociator Galeppi, who had accompanied Azara, still however contrived to save appearances. Suddenly returned from Florence, he arrives at Rome, has a conference with the pope, another with the cardinal Busca. A new congregation, more numerous than the preceding, is directed to examine the conditions of peace proposed by the French government, and rejects them as inadmissible. Galeppi returns to Florence to try the effect of a new attempt: but the predominant party at Rome were bent upon war; and the step which they had taken rendered it unavoidable: they therefore make preparation for it, and by means which only increase the discontent of the people.

The pope depreciates the coin by increasing its nominal value above one fourth.

He deprives the churches and private individuals of all their superfluous plate.

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He obliges all proprietors to sell their corn at a low price to the department of the *annona*, and, in payment, to accept *cedole* at par, though at this time they were subject to a discount of above fifty *per cent*.

The military preparatives were now carried on with redoubled activity. A civic guard was organised at Rome; and the greatest families aspired to distinguish themselves on the occasion. The senator Rezzonico is nominated generalissimo of that guard: the three princes, Aldobrandini, Gabrielli, and Giustiniani, are appointed colonels. Thirty-two companies are formed, each consisting of a hundred and fifty men: numerous patrols scour the streets by night and by day; and Rome *the holy* once more becomes Rome the warlike. Levies are made on all sides; seven hundred men are dispatched toward Bologna and Ferrara: the cardinal Busca collects all the vagabonds scattered throughout the Ecclesiastical State, who are compelled either to take up arms in its defence or to quit the country: the militia assembles with activity: nought is seen in every direction but transportations of small arms\*, artillery, tents, waggons. Contributions of every species pour in from all quarters: gold, silver, jewels, *cedole*, provisions, cattle, every thing is offered with a kind of enthusiasm which might have been mistaken for that of patriotism. Several rich individuals levied corps at their own charge, or defrayed the expense of equipping or arming them—the constable Colonna, for instance, a complete regiment of infantry—the banker Turlonia, a company of cavalry consisting of eighty men fully equipped.

In this almost general ferment, equal activity is every where displayed. The Roman government, shaking off its habitual torpor, seems to have resumed some portion of energy only for the purpose of running with hasty strides to ruin. Pius, himself the tool of the predominant faction, sends to all the catholic courts a manifesto, in which, after having explained the state of his negotiation

\* The expression in the original is somewhat different, viz. *armes blanches*, comprising swords, bayonets, pikes, &c. &c. but excluding all kinds of fire-arms.



tion with France, he calls upon them to unite in the defence of religion. At the same time he addresses to his subjects a proclamation exhorting them to take up arms for the purpose of repelling the aggressor. He suspends the execution of the armistice, which had already been commenced. Half a million, on account of the contribution which he had to pay, was by this time at Rimini: he ordered it to be brought back, together with the cattle that constituted a part of the fourth million payable in articles of provision. The seven hundred thousand crowns drawn from the castle of Saint-Angelo for the same purpose, were carried back to the coffers whence they had been taken: the statues already packed up in cases, were replaced in their former stations: the cardinal Pignatelli, who was advanced on his journey toward Brescia, received orders to return.

All these measures, liable to the charge of rashness at least, were principally concerted with the court of Vienna; but from that of Naples likewise, support was confidently expected; when suddenly the Roman government were informed that the marquis del Vasto had just signed a treaty of peace between that court and the French republic. They instantly considered themselves as undone; and in fact so they were, but for a combination of circumstances to which the papacy was indebted for the ephemeral prolongation of its existence.

Let posterity determine what motives could have induced Buonaparte to spare the pontifical throne which it would have been so easy for him to crush under the wheels of his triumphal car; suffice it for us to retrace here a summary sketch of those facts of which we have been witnesses.

The chevalier Azara, who had gone to Florence in the hope of saving the court of Rome, felt something more than astonishment on learning, that, in his absence, so great and successful pains were taken to ruin it; and that, instead of wishing for his return, the cabal openly congratulated themselves on having rescued the pontiff from his influence. Pius knew not well how he ought to conduct himself toward the Spanish minister: on the one hand, he dared not venture to follow his counsels,

counfels; on the other, he was afraid of displeasing the court of Madrid. In October 1796, he thought it incumbent on him to make a direct application to Charles IV., requesting him to interpose his mediation between France and the Holy See.

The Spanish monarch returned a very affectionate answer, in which however he explicitly declined the requested interference. The pontiff now felt how unwisely he had acted in abandoning Azara to the blind indignation of the fanatics. The cardinal Busca endeavoured to preserve toward the chevalier a semblance of cordiality and gratitude even at the moment while he entertained with the court of Vienna a perfidious connexion, of which the intended issue was to terminate in the overturning of all that the Spanish minister had accomplished: and in his correspondence, to which he laboured to give the appearance of friendship, he had intimated to him that the pope would feel himself seriously embarrassed if, at so critical a juncture, that minister were again to make his appearance at Rome. This was the circumstance that gave rise to the letter written by Azara to cardinal Busca in the year 1796,—a letter certainly not intended for publication, but which nevertheless was published.

That letter was noble and lofty: the just resentment that warmed Azara's breast, was disguised in it under the forms of friendship and familiarity, which however did not prevent it from being extremely apparent. He gave the papal minister information of the treaty which we had recently concluded with the Neapolitan court, and of the consequences which must thence result to the Holy See. "I ought not," added he, "to communicate such intelligence to a minister who is not at liberty to enter into explanations with a *poor infected mortal*: but my heart is weak, and feels an affection for my friends, even when they are *ungrateful*, because it supposes them to be mistaken, and willing to be undeceived."—"I see," added he in another place, "that, in spite of evil influence, he" (the pope who had written to him) "retains a friendship and kindness for me: assure him that I am very far from wishing  
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“ to expose him to the inconvenience which he might  
 “ suffer from my return to Rome. I well know to  
 “ what excess a crowd of phrenzied fools are capable  
 “ of proceeding: they may cause the Spanish palace to  
 “ be set on fire, my furniture to be destroyed—they may  
 “ indulge in every outrage against me—but they cannot  
 “ disturb the peace of my conscience. It does not be-  
 “ come me to obtrude my advice, while you have so  
 “ many other advisers: yet, as a last token of my friend-  
 “ ship, I must inform you that a moment may save you  
 “ at the expense of some sacrifices: but, that moment  
 “ once elapsed, your ruin will be complete . . . . .  
 “ If a reliance on your own strength, if your arma-  
 “ ments, inspire you with confidence, *consummatum est*\*.”  
 —“ Assure the pope,” said he in conclusion, “ that I  
 “ am his friend, not his flatterer.” Then assuming  
 with the cardinal a tone of familiar gaiety which remind-  
 ed him of his former connexions with the Spanish mi-  
 nister, “ As to you,” said he, “ most eminent secreta-  
 “ ry! I would be strongly tempted to give you a drub-  
 “ bing, and then to dine with you on turkey and truffles.  
 “ Adieu! I bestow on you my benediction.”

But these reproaches were ineffectual, these advices  
 came too late: the pope was too closely surrounded by  
 evil counsellors, to be any longer accessible to the voice  
 of reason. In vain was Cacault vested with plenipoten-  
 tial authority to negotiate: in vain did Buonaparte send  
 information to the pope that his holiness had it in his  
 power to obtain terms less severe than those which had  
 been sent to him from Florence; that, for his own part,  
 he wished “ rather to be the saviour of the head of the  
 “ church, and of those beautiful countries, than their  
 “ destroyer.” The only answer obtained by Cacault,  
 was, that the court of Rome lay under engagements to  
 the emperor, whom it was therefore necessary for them  
 to consult in the first instance.

Accordingly there existed at that time a very active ne-  
 gotiation between monsignor Albani and the cabinet of  
 Vienna. At first the interpreter of the Holy See was  
 very indifferently received: he heard the court of Rome

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condemned

\* The business is done—'tis all over with you.

condemned for having signed the armistice and formed a connexion with the court of Naples without the emperor's consent; nor did he obtain more than a hope that his imperial majesty would not abandon the cause of the church.

The coldness of his reception nearly had the effect of leading back the court of Rome into the path of prudence, and inducing them to resume the negotiations which had been commenced at Florence. Such indeed was the conduct recommended by some of the cardinals, and particularly by Valenti and Antici: but the opinion of cardinal Albani prevailed. "There is," said he to the congregation, "nothing surprising in the reception of which you complain: it is only a natural consequence of the German manners: let us temporise: we may rest assured that the court of Vienna will again come over to us."

The event in some measure verified the predictions of the cardinal dean. Soon after, a courier from his nephew arrives with information that the emperor had consented to an alliance with the pontiff, and promised to send him general Colli, several officers, and ten thousand men, to drive the French from both the legations.

This intelligence intoxicated with joy the pope and that crowd of fanatics who wished for war, from whose dangers they were personally exempt. The delirium appeared universal in Rome, because moderate men were silent and sighed in secret. Whoever should have attempted to open the eyes of the court of Rome to the inanity of their projects, and to the dangers which they courted, would have been branded as a *Jacobin*. The fatal war into which they had determined to plunge, was clothed with all the forms of a war in defence of religion.

Each body of troops, previous to their departure, assisted at a sermon well calculated to fire their bosoms with fanaticism. The volunteer cavalry, before they commenced their march, devoted a week, not to tactical manœuvres, but to *spiritual exercises*. On the sixth of January 1797, were consecrated, in Saint Peter's church, the colours of several corps who were ready to take the field. On those colours was embroidered a cross in imitation

tation of the *labarum* of Constantine, accompanied by the following inscription, an infallible presage of victory—" *In hoc signo vinces.*"—" Go !" cried the fanatic monks who were commissioned to exhort those patriot heroes—" go fight in the cause of religion ! Imitate your ancestors ! Go, and conquer the universe !"

Amid this phrensy of enthusiasm, it was difficult to obtain a hearing for the language of moderation. Cacaull nevertheless attempted it: he proposed some conditions which under any other circumstances would have been accepted. The Neapolitan minister, the marquis del Vasto, who at this time possessed considerable influence, acted as mediator in hope of inducing the court of Rome to accede to them. But the congregation being consulted, rejected them almost unanimously ; demanding, as a preliminary, the restitution of the two legations.

During these transactions, on the twentieth of January arrives general Colli, whose presence inspires the Romans with additional boldness. He visits his holiness's petty army: he is pleased with the soldiers, dissatisfied with the officers: he demands augmentations, particularly in cavalry. The pope reposes in him a blind confidence, and intrusts him with the exercise of his sovereign power. He strains every nerve to complete, under the command of the Austrian general, the number of at least six thousand horse and eight thousand foot.—But Buonaparte is soon to re-appear upon the stage, and the scene will quickly change.

That youthful conqueror, obliged to raise the siege of Mantua, and marched with a detachment of his army to strike a blow at Leghorn. At the expiration of three weeks he was returned. In the interval of his absence, the scattered parts of his army had formed a union. Our enemies, whose hopes had been re-animated by that diversion to a point remote from the principal theatre of the war, now speedily saw all their projects overthrown. The year 1796 concluded with a series of successes so brilliant and rapid and numerous, that the military history of the universe cannot perhaps furnish a more memorable epoch.

It was during this time that the pope carried on his negotiations

negotiations with the emperor, and obtained from him the promise of ten thousand men and one of his generals. We already had strong reasons for suspecting this perfidious under-plot, when Buonaparte found positive proof of it in an intercepted letter from the cardinal Busca to monsignor Albani who so faithfully served at Vienna the anti-gallican faction in Rome. The cardinal very explicitly said in that letter—"So long as I am allowed to hope for assistance from the emperor, I will temporise with respect to the propositions of peace made to us by the French." And in another place—"Still true to my opinion, and jealous of my honour, which I think hurt by treating with the French while there exists a negotiation expending between us and the court of Vienna." He spoke in it with great frankness respecting general Colli: he impatiently awaited his arrival, he calculated with monsignor Albani the means of exciting a civil war in France, "without too deeply implicating the Holy See," &c.

After such a discovery there was no longer any delicacy to be observed toward the court of Rome. On the thirteenth of Pluviose (February 18, 1797) Buonaparte, from his head-quarters at Bologna, declared, that, the pope having formally refused to execute two articles of the armistice concluded on the second of Messidor preceding—having incessantly continued to excite people to the crusade against France—having even caused his troops to advance within ten miles of Bologna—having commenced hostile negotiations with the court of Vienna—and, finally, having refused to answer the pacific overtures made by citizen Cacault, minister of the French republic, &c.—the armistice was broken.

Immediately after the promulgation of this species of manifesto, the French army invaded the Ecclesiastical State, seized upon Imola, Forli, Cesena (the pope's birth-place); and, in the outset, Pius suffered the loss of four or five hundred men killed, a thousand prisoners, four pieces of artillery, &c.

Colli, however, was exempt from disgrace of these first disasters. He had not reached Rome until the twelfth of January; when he immediately bestowed his attention on the organisation of the papal forces. But our warriors gained so rapid successes that the commander in

in chief of the troops of the Holy See was soon left without an army to command. In few days the French made themselves masters of Romagna, the duchy of Urbino, and the marquisate of Ancona; and on the thirtieth of Pluviose (February 18) Buonaparte dated his dispatches from his head-quarters at Tolentino, some leagues beyond Loreto: for the celebrated image of the Virgin of that place had performed no miracles to check the rapidity of our career. The *Santa Casa*, which contained it, was situate on an eminence commanding the shore of the Adriatic, from which it is two miles and half distant. Defended by a feeble wall, two small forts, and a garrison of twelve men, what resources did it possess for resistance on every side, and particularly on that of the land? But the beach is unapproachable except by boats: and that wall, those forts, the proximity of the fortress of Ancona—the strength of the church containing the treasures, which is solidly built, and secured with brazen gates—the *Santa Casa* itself being coated with marble and shut with iron doors—all these circumstances combined were sufficient to preserve the revered image from the rapacity of the infidels. The pope little suspected by what kind of *infidels* this monument of superstition was to be plundered: it suffered that fate from the hands of the French so easily victorious. A lavish profusion of diamonds ornamented the Virgin and the infant Jesus: but devotees are credulous and far from quick-sighted; and the profane visit of Buonaparte was necessary to convince the world that the greater number of those diamonds were equally false as the divinity to whom they were consecrated.

Meanwhile what were the Romans doing? They had at first suffered their imaginations to be dazzled by the most brilliant illusions on seeing that the emperor seriously attended to the interests of the Holy See: anti-gallican hatred was suffered to rage uncontrolled: Frenchmen were imprisoned: our commissioners were insulted, and particularly our minister Cacault. But, on hearing of the triumphant march of the Gallic army, Rome trembled, and turned her attention toward the means of appeasing the resentment of the exasperated conqueror.

That conqueror, however, was less formidable than the  
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the Romans supposed him : he did not wish to overturn the pontifical throne ; and he now gave a second proof of his disposition in that respect.

When, in the preceding year, after he had invaded the legatine governments of Bologna and Ferrara, there broke forth an insurrection in the latter, the little town of Lugo, which had been the principal focus of the disorder, was indeed treated with great rigor : but the hand of vengeance stopped there : for Buonaparte aimed only at producing repentance ; witness, his treatment of cardinal Mattei, archbishop of Ferrara.

Sprung from one of the principal families of Rome, and elevated to the highest dignities of the church, Mattei was as simple as a village-priest, and with all the sincerity of his heart a fanatic. At the approach of the French, he had mounted his pulpit and declaimed against them with truly apostolic zeal. Buonaparte, victorious in spite of his eminence's holy oratory, sent for him, reprimanded him, and ordered him to prison. On the morrow he summoned him to his presence, and made him undergo a long admonition, to which the good cardinal made no other answer than a humble *peccava*\*. Buonaparte, affected by his docility, proposed to him, as an atonement for his offences, to go in person to Rome, there to negotiate a solid peace, and thus to save his country and his sovereign.

Mattei embraced the offer with enthusiasm, and promised every thing that was required of him, provided that the spiritual rights of the Holy See should remain inviolate. He more than once repeated—" We can resignedly submit to every temporal sacrifice : but, for God's sake, dear general ! let us not meddle with spiritual matters." In this disposition he set out for Rome, where at first he experienced an indifferent reception because he made profession of pacific sentiments which did not accord with those of the Holy See : but it was soon glad to employ his interposition.

He had now continued at Rome since the month of October 1796 : and, on the news of Buonaparte's successes, he wrote to that conqueror a pathetic letter which did

\* I have transgressed—I have done wrong.



did not fail to produce its intended effect. Buonaparte answered it on the twenty-fifth of Pluviose: "I recognise," said he to the cardinal, "in the letter that you have taken the trouble of writing to me, that simplicity of manners which characterises you."—The general then entered into some details respecting the causes of complaint which the court of Rome had given to France, and concluded with these words—"I am willing once more to prove to entire Europe the moderation of the directory of the French republic, by granting him\* *five days* to send a negotiator, provided with full powers, who shall repair to Foligno, where I shall be," &c.

Instead of a single plenipotentiary, the pope without delay sent him four—his nephew the duke Ludovico-Braschi, and the marquis Camillo Massimi, merely for the sake of adding dignity to the transaction—the cardinal Mattei, as personally known to Buonaparte—and monsignor Galeppi, an acute and dextrous negotiator, and, of the four, the one upon whom he placed the greatest reliance. They had an interview with Buonaparte at Tolentino, instead of Foligno, the place before appointed.

The conferences at first proceeded slowly. The plenipotentiaries attempted to higggle about a few millions: but Buonaparte, who was equally in haste to levy a sort of contribution on the Ecclesiastical State, and to return and place himself again at the head of his army to invade the hereditary states of the emperor—Buonaparte, tired of the tedious progress of the Roman negotiators, said to cardinal Mattei on the eighteenth of February 1797, "If you do not to-morrow give unreserved consent to all my propositions, on the following day I'll march against Rome."—On the morrow the good cardinal waited on the general, saying, "We consent to the whole."

Immediately they began to draw up the articles: they dined: after dinner the treaty was concluded: they signed it: they supped, embraced each other, and separated. The next day Buonaparte, with the officers of his staff, was on his way to Austria, having left behind him general Victor, who, with an army of fifteen thousand men, formed a line across the Ecclesiastical State, from Perugia

to

\* The Pope.

to Ancona, and remained there until the articles of the treaty were carried into execution. The principal of those articles were in substance as follow—

The pope shall pay thirty-one millions.

He shall furnish sixteen hundred horses fully caparisoned.

He shall grant a pension to the family of Basseville.

) There shall be a treaty of commerce concluded with France.

All Romagna shall be free ; and there shall be a French garrison at Ancona.

While this treaty was under negotiation, the greater part of the Ecclesiastical State was occupied by the French arms ; and all was confusion at Rome. Terror had silenced resentment. There was neither courage nor unanimity in the councils : not a man to be found who was capable of directing the measures which circumstances required. The pope in particular was panic-struck ; and, while his deputies were setting out for Tolentino, he was making his preparations for retiring to Naples. A considerable treasure was to have been sent before him to Terracina. On the report of that project, the people flocked in crowds to the bank to exchange their *cedole*, which they offered at a discount of seventy per cent. The treasure disappeared : the pontiff was diverted from his project ; and, to give a different direction to the people's thoughts, he lavishly treated them with processions, the forty hours' prayers, and pulpit invective against the French.

With respect to general Colli, he soon perceived that he had been placed at the head of troops who ran away at the slightest shadow of danger. He had reason to congratulate himself on the resolution which the pope had taken of terminating so unfortunate a war with all possible speed : but he had the mortification of seeing the pontiff's deputies set out to beg a peace at Tolentino without giving him any notice, and the treaty afterward signed without any intimation to him of what was going forward. Never had a campaign been of shorter duration, never mission less successful. He hastened to quit a theatre where he had found neither glory nor respect.

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The pope had much stronger claims to pity, if indeed compassion be due to merited misfortunes. He saw the fabric of his hopes overthrown, three of his provinces irrecoverably lost, his coffers empty, his subjects discontented, and already exhausted by the pecuniary efforts which the armistice had required. New exertions however were necessary to fulfil the conditions of the recent treaty. On the twenty-fourth of February, the cardinal Busca published a mournful proclamation, in which he reminded the pontiff's subjects, that, "on the sixth of July preceding, they had been called upon to deliver up the whole of their plate; that afterward the pope had graciously contented himself with one half; but that, the present conjuncture being yet more critical than the former, his holiness commanded that the remaining moiety of those articles of gold and silver should within the space of three days be carried to the pontifical treasury.

This was one of the last public acts performed by that cardinal Busca who had so insolently betrayed the confidence reposed in him by the ministers of France and Spain. The pope, to convince the French government of the sincerity of his conversion, thought it necessary to dismiss the perfidious minister who had led him astray, and well nigh ruined him. By that step he particularly wished to appease the chevalier Azara, whom a very just resentment kept as it were in exile at Florence. Accordingly, as soon as Busca was retired from office, pressing solicitations were made to induce the Spanish minister to return to Rome. Accordingly he did return, but not till after the expiration of a month. The pride of the Holy See, however, would not suffer the public to entertain an idea that it was solely for the purpose of gratifying the court of Madrid that the cardinal had been dismissed. A report was spread in Rome that the pope had only yielded to the express desire of Busca himself.

The choice of a person to succeed him was embarrassing. The post of prime minister could not be given to any cardinal against whom strong prepossessions were entertained by the French government—a circumstance which necessarily excluded a great number of the members of the Sacred College. The Neapolitan minister, the marquis del Vasto, was at this time all-powerful in Rome.

Rome. He was the soul of the party who had hurried the Holy See into ill-judged measures, and whose hopes had been so completely disappointed. He had recently cemented an alliance between his family and that of the cardinal Doria, of whom a favourable idea had been formed in France, and with whom the French and Spanish ministers had always lived on a footing of intimacy. He thought that the choice of such a minister would reconcile all the different interests; and, while he only consulted his own private affection, he well enough promoted our views. The cardinal Doria united a good understanding with purity of intentions, but possessed neither the experience nor the energy which the circumstances of the times would have required. He did not personally merit any serious reproaches from us: and, though he was unable to support the tottering fabric of the Roman government, at least he did not contribute to accelerate its fall.

But that government had already received the fatal shock, and the peace of Tolentino could not save it from ruin. That pacification had only increased the disasters, the discontents, and the exhaustion of the state. The papal territories were every where shaken by violent convulsions: in the marquisate of Ancona, at Macerata, at Iesi, at Monte-Sant-Elpidio, insurrectionary attacks were made upon the French; nor was it without bloody execution that the rebels could be repressed. In the duchy of Urbino, on the contrary, where the Gallic invasion had excited a relish and a hope of liberty, the people felt extreme reluctance to bend their necks anew to the pontifical yoke: and in a state much more contiguous to the capital, in the Perugino, there existed a wish to shake off the papal chain, and form a union with the Cis-Padane republic. Never had any country groaned under the infliction of so many scourges at the same moment.

The resentment of Spain furnished an additional cause of chagrin to the Holy See. Charles IV. had felt deep indignation at the manner in which the court of Rome had behaved toward the chevalier Azara: and he thought it inconsistent with his dignity that he should again make his appearance there until he had received signal satisfaction. Nevertheless, when the Spanish monarch saw the

the Ecclesiastical State invaded by our troops, and the holy father threatened in his very capital, his filial piety was moved: the chevalier Azara was authorised to return to his post, and accordingly he went back to Rome in April 1797.

Charles went further, but under the influence of certain motives which the Holy See did not perhaps suspect till afterward.—There were then at this court two prelates, supposed to be very active intriguers, and whom a prevalent party wished to remove out of the way under some plausible pretext. The critical position in which his holiness at this time stood, furnished such a pretext: a proposal was made to them of going to compliment the pope, to give him consolation, to aid him by their counsels: and, for the purpose of concealing the real object of this mission, the precaution was taken of decorating it by the addition of a prelate respectable for his character, as well as the regularity of his conduct and his exalted dignity—the cardinal Lorenzana, archbishop of Toledo. The two prelates who accompanied him were d'Espuig, archbishop of Seville, who had formerly been at Rome in the quality of auditor of the *Rota*—and Musquiz, archbishop of Seleucia, and ghostly director to the queen.

These three prelates set out under a persuasion that they were going to fulfil a very important mission. D'Espuig, in particular, who entertained ambitious views, did not doubt that it would conduct him to the honours of the cardinalate and the office of protector of the churches of Spain. The cardinal Lorenzana, much more simple in his manners as well as his desires, and sincerely attached to the Holy See, undertook the journey to Rome as an apostolic peregrination. He was a devoted son going to aid his parent in distress. The reverend fathers of the order of Mercy, with whom he had formerly had connexions, had prepared a lodging in their convent for him and his two fellow-travellers. The chevalier Azara had recently returned to Rome, where he still had numerous enemies. Wishing to remove the cardinal Lorenzana beyond the reach of their influence, he urgently pressed him to come and reside in the palace of Spain. The two other prelates remained with the monks  
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of the order of Mercy, and soon discovered the inanity of their mission.

This triple embassy, which had made so much noise in Spain and Italy, finally appeared to have had no other object than a simple homage paid by his catholic majesty to the head of the church. The archbishop of Seville and the queen's confessor returned to Spain after the expiration of a few months; the cardinal Lorenzana alone continuing with the pope, whom he did not abandon even in his concluding misfortunes. This was one consolation which the pious and humane Charles wished to leave to the dethroned pontiff.

Comotions, anxieties of every kind, lively alarms, serious losses, a catastrophe which cost him at once his money and his peace and his glory, humiliations, insurrections, every thing that can render a prince's reign tempestuous—such were the events that marked for Pius the chief part of the year 1797. He was as deeply affected by them as he possibly could be: he was attacked by so severe a malady during the month of May, that the choice of a successor was already become an object of deliberation. Three candidates were placed on the list—Mattei, whose interposition had obtained peace for the Holy See, and who was supposed to be less disagreeable to France than any other cardinal—Antici, whose address and activity we have more than once had occasion to mention—and Chiaramonte, who was supported by the older cardinals who were the most strongly attached to the obsolete pretensions of the court of Rome.

Pius's recovery frustrated many calculations, disappointed many hopes, and even excited dissatisfaction among the Romans, who are more desirous of changes than any other people. The duke Braschi felt the effects of their ill-humour: coming out from his convalescent uncle, he was stunned with a peal of hisses; and, not daring to return to his own palace, he immediately set out for Terracina, taking his way through his duchy of Nemi. This was a new symptom of that fermentation which was beginning to discover itself in several parts of the papal dominions, and even at Rome, where the

the scarcity of specie inflamed the public discontent to the highest degree. That thirst of revolution which had already possessed a certain portion of the people, showed itself in various modes. On the gate of that same duke Braschi, had been written in read letters these menacing words—" *Arrendetevi, tiranni! O morte, o libertà\** !" Bills were also stuck up in various places, holding forth the same alarming alternative. The *Carmagnole* and other patriotic airs were publicly sung; and people were heard to say aloud in the streets, " As soon as the pope dies, the face of affairs will be changed." No measures were spared that could tend to provoke an insurrection, or at least to excite the apprehension of such an event. In one place was read on the walls, " The time is come;" in another, " Rome is in her last agony †." In the beginning of August, a paper was seen posted up, which contained the following lines :

" Non abbiamo pazienza :

" Non vogliamo più eminenza,

" Non vogliamo più santità,

" Ma eguaglianza e libertà ‡."

For some time the Roman government continued to witness these disorders with nearly passive apathy: but about the middle of the year 1797 they appeared to assume so alarming an aspect, that it very unseasonably relinquished that system of torpid inactivity, which never could have proved so fatal to it as the vigilance and severity

\* Submit, ye tyrants! Death or liberty!

† Literally, " *at the extreme unction*," in allusion to the popish ceremony of anointing sick persons with consecrated oil in their last agonies.

‡ Our patience is exhausted: we do not choose to have any more Emperors or Holinesses, but liberty and equality.

verity that it thought necessary to be exerted in these latter times. The garrison of Rome was changed, and augmented with additional force: the castle of Saint-Angelo was supplied with provisions and ammunition, as if there had existed an intention of making it sustain a regular siege; and troops were stationed in different quarters of the city.

These, however, were only precautionary measures, for which the influence of urgent terror might be admitted as a reasonable apology: but when the government was seen to employ moreover the expedients of trembling and oppressive despotism—to arrest persons who appeared *suspicious*, such as Angelucci, a skilful surgeon and a zealous patriot, who has since been so amply avenged for that transient outrage—two brothers, of the name of Bouchard, booksellers—Ascanelli, a rich Jew, in whose house were asserted to have been found ten thousand yellow cockades (the colour worn by the Romans), a quantity of fire-arms, three trees of liberty, &c.—from that moment people said that “the last hour of the papacy was at hand.”

The pecuniary embarrassments, which alone would have been sufficient to excite a revolution, were a serious addition to the many already existing causes of anxiety. The contribution which the French had exacted by the treaty of Tolentino, had exhausted every public, every private, coffer. The pontiff had been obliged to repeat his emissions of *cedole*, consequently to depreciate still lower that paper-money which was already in so low a state of depreciation. The riches of the church still presented him with some resources. Those scruples which respect that *sacred* property in ordinary times, were now wholly unseasonable: accordingly, in the month of August, all the clergy, secular and regular, were ordered to exhibit a minute statement of their property, and within six months to furnish a loan to the amount of one-sixth of its value at an interest of three per cent.

This edict increased the public discontent. The clergy openly accused Pius of violating the sacred canons, the bulls, and the oaths by which he had bound himself on his accession to the pontifical throne. He had gone  
to



to Vienna, they observed, " for the express purpose of diverting Joseph II. from his intention of devoting a part of the church property to the necessities of his state ; and now himself imitated the conduct of that philosophic prince." The pope could hardly appear in public without being hooted and hissed. Several cardinals were even insulted with abusive language, among others the cardinal Carandini, who fell sick of chagrin in consequence of it. The Roman purple was not accustomed to be treated with such irreverence. But it was principally against the cardinal nephew that the torrent of popular indignation was directed. His name, surrounded with disgraceful epithets, was displayed in all the inflammatory bills with which every wall in Rome was covered.

The fermentation now spread through all ranks and all ages. At this period was discovered a kind of conspiracy formed among the students, who were impatient of the yoke of their preceptors, and enamoured of the tricolor cockade. The elements of a revolution were collecting and combining ; and it was foreseen that a single spark falling among this heap of combustible materials would produce a conflagration : but it did not yet appear probable that it would be France who should set fire to it by hurling her thunder into the collected pile. Still smaller seemed the probability that a government which by its weakness was so deeply interested in preventing every crisis, should itself provoke that under which it sank in ruin. A feeble government, long known to be such, cannot with impunity make a display of force. The arrests, the proscriptions, instead of curing, exasperated the disease ; and despotism, after a vain effort to inspire terror, was itself terrified in turn.

Under pretence of maintaining peace in the city, the regular troops and militia received orders to hold themselves in readiness for every event. The pope required that six men of the company which constituted his guard of honour should be posted every night in his ante-chamber, and the same number on the outside of the Vatican. The time was now no more when his guards were only employed for the decoration of his court ! Without having ever indulged in any violent excesses,  
he

He saw himself, by vanity and improvidence and obstinacy, reduced to the painful condition of suspicious tyrants.

Amid this general subversion produced by the conflict of so many contending passions, it was almost impossible to advance a step in any direction without exciting murmurs. The individuals, whether French or Romans, who were held in confinement, loudly complained of injustice and oppression: they maintained, that, since they suffered on account of the Gallic revolution, whoever was vested with any power by the French government was of course their natural protector; nor could they pardon either luke-warmness, tardiness, or even discussion, on the part of the political or military agents whose interposition they implored.

During these transactions, arrived at Rome, as minister plenipotentiary of the French republic, Joseph Buonaparte, brother to the general. Every eye was anxiously turned toward this new representative of France: every individual studied to interpret his most trifling words, his most insignificant actions: the devotees thought or affected to think that a French republican must necessarily be a man of repulsive demeanour, regardless of the customs of different countries, and especially void of religion. They were therefore agreeably surprised to find him conciliating, full of urbanity, and particularly to see him go to mass. His behaviour in the outset, his language, struck them as ominous of good; and the partisans of the Holy See began to imagine that it yet rested on solid foundations. The French republic, however, still had reason to be displeased with it on more than one ground—

It kept on foot a greater number of troops than it ought to have done after the conclusion of the peace:

Romans, foreigners, particularly Frenchmen, were persecuted through hatred of the Gallic revolution:

The pope seemed to feel a repugnance to the formation of any connexion with the Cis-Alpine republic:

French emigrants and refractory priests, even since the eighteenth of Fructidor in the fifth year of the republic (Sept. 4, 1797), flocked in crowds to Rome, and were there well received:

Finally,

Finally, a new Austrian general, Provera, was come from Vienna to take the command of the papal troops.

The minister Buonaparte energetically explained himself on all these heads, and obtained some half-successes. The peace of Campo-Formio had recently been signed; and the court of Rome could not now entertain any perfidious hope, any concealed plan lurking behind the veil of studied appearances.

Several of the persons detained in prison were set at liberty, and, among others, Angelucci and the two brothers of the name of Bouchard. After a short time, those three martyrs of liberty set out from Rome, as it were in triumph, and amid the acclamations of the multitude, to go and present themselves to Buonaparte at Rastadt, and thank him for their deliverance, which was in great measure his work. The enthusiasm which they excited, especially at the moment of their departure, gave considerable umbrage to the friends of the papacy, who said that those excessive demonstrations of joy were "insults to the government."

In truth, the Roman government were in every point of view degraded. They had nobody to whom they could intrust the command of their petty army: they had not been able to retain Provera who had been sent to them by the court of Vienna; for Buonaparte had informed the pope, through the medium of his brother, that, unless that Austrian general quitted Rome within twenty-four hours, he would march into the Ecclesiastical State and recommence hostilities.

The cardinal Doria was commissioned to communicate to Provera the intentions of the French general, and accompanied the execution of that disagreeable task with all the forms which could tend to render it excusable. Provera only requested a respite of two days, which was granted to him. Previous to his departure, he waited on the pope, who received him with tears in his eyes, and assured him that nothing but force could reduce him to that extremity. The next day Provera was on his way to Naples.

At the same time the papacy stood in a very embarrassing position with respect to the Cis-Alpine republic, a

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dangerous

dangerous and importunate neighbour, who, indignant at the proofs of ill-will given to her by the court of Rome, had already determined to declare war against the Holy See. Pius sent to Milan a minister commissioned in his name to acknowledge the new republic. But this tardy recognition did not disarm the anger of the Cis-Alpine government, which had not only reproaches in reserve for the papacy, but also claims to advance at its expense.

Those claims related to certain portions of the marquisate of Ancona and of the duchy of Urbino, which had been dismembered from the exarchate of Ravenna by king Pepin, and given to pope Stephen III. This was going very far back in quest of very feeble arguments: but the Cis-Alpine government added arguments of a more conclusive nature to these diplomatic pretensions: it directed Dombrowski, a Polish general in its service, to seize upon fort Santo-Leone, situate on the frontier of the duchy of Urbino. The peasants of the surrounding country, called together by the sound of the *tocfin*, and animated by that devotion, or rather that spirit of fanaticism, with which pains had long been taken to inspire them—the unfortunate peasants engaged in combat with the Cis-Alpine troops. This first scene of civil war between the inhabitants of Italy was pretty bloody. Better conduct could not have been expected of the papal militia. The fort of Santo-Leone even made some resistance. The commandant, however, yielded to menaces, but obtained the honours of war.—For the present, the victorious troops did not proceed farther.

Consternation prevailed in Rome on the intelligence of this aggression. The government was oppressed by too many calamities to think of defending itself. Scarcity of cash, popular murmurs, ruinous measures of finance, exundations of the Tiber, insurrections in various parts of the Ecclesiastical State—every circumstance concurred in overwhelming the pontiff with a weight of solicitude. The first and only plan that presented itself to his mind was that of appeasing the resentment of his enterprising neighbours with all possible

possible speed: for which purpose, he framed, in concert with the minister Buonaparte, a memorial in which he acknowledged the Cis-Alpine republic, and testified the most earnest desire of living on good terms with it.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### *Immediate Cause of the Downfall of the Roman Government.*

**W**E now approach that epoch so decisive for the Holy See—the twenty-eighth of December, 1797, from which day we may date its subversion.

Ten or fifteen days, however, previous to that period, there did not yet appear any of those symptoms that are usually precursive to a striking catastrophe. The discontent of the people was indeed strongly marked; and it arose from various motives—the dearness of provisions, the daily increasing depreciation of the *cedole*, and several edicts respecting money-matters, which alarmed the indigent class of the community: But it did not appear probable that these grievances should so soon have produced

duced a universal insurrection, much less the overthrow of an ancient government to which the people were attached by numerous ties. There were in Rome many persons of different ranks who professed the maxims of the French revolution: but they were not all equally respectable for their conduct; and there were but a very small number whose influence could appear formidable to the Holy See. A little activity in the police would perhaps have proved sufficient to keep these in subjection for a long time: and nothing less than one of those great events which forcibly speak to the senses—such as the suicide of Lucretia, or the blood-stained garb of Cæsar—would have been requisite to produce a revolution so sudden, so complete, from elements apparently so weak.

The pontiff himself affected the most perfect security amid the weighty subjects of inquietude by which he was environed. He went every day to prayers at the Vatican, and afterward to take an airing a few miles out of Rome. Whatever anxiety he felt, solely regarded the result of his negotiation at Milan, whither he had sent on mission a cardinal who gave him little hope. The Cis-Alpine republic showed no disposition to conciliation: it kept provisional possession of the fort of Santo-Leone: it talked of withdrawing from the pawnbanks of Rome the sums which its citizens had lodged there while they remained under the Austrian dominion.

The priests, acting perfectly in character, continued to inflame the weak minds, to foster in them an aversion to French principles, and to mourn over the calamities of the church: they ran from temple to temple, from street to street, preaching and predicting “the end of the world,” and, according to the custom which has ever prevailed, calling in the aid of miracles to support their prophecies. They had not an idea that they were so near the end of their reign, which to them in fact was “the end of the world.”

At this time there was in Rome a prophetess of another kind—a French woman named la Brouffe, who was with all sincerity a fanatic, or rather under the influence of sober madness. She foretold that the empire of the popes was drawing near to its end; that heaven

was

was weary of it: and that she would not depart from Rome till she had seen that prediction accomplished: At any other time her extravagancies would have excited only laughter or pity: but at the present period they co-incided with much more alarming symptoms; and they did not fail to produce some sensation.

Such were the various dispositions of the inhabitants of Rome at the moment of the silently gathering and almost unperceived storm which broke forth on the twenty-eighth of December.

We live at too short a distance from that event to use the language of history in relating it. The passions have on both sides disfigured its features; nor would they, on either hand, pardon that impartiality which should fairly appreciate what was in great measure their work. A summary of facts, therefore, and a statement of their consequences, will be sufficient for the performance of the task which we have undertaken to fulfil.

It appears from the temperate report sent by the ambassador Buonaparte, on the eleventh of Nivose, to the minister of foreign relations, that neither he, nor the chevalier Azara whom his sagacity and long experience rendered so competent a judge of such matters, had conceived that a popular commotion, attempted five days before, bore any characteristic of a nature that could justly alarm the government; and that, far from concurring in it, the French minister had marked it with his disapprobation. The papal soldiery, if directed by prudent orders or guided by well-intentioned chiefs, would have been sufficient to quell that disturbance without effusion of blood. But the insurgents having run to take refuge within the jurisdiction of the French ambassador's palace, which ought to have been for them not a place of head-quarters as they pretended, but an inviolable asylum, the armed force, equally vile as atrocious, had the audacity to pursue them into its precincts, and to convert that asylum into a theatre of battle. Already the law of nations was most glaringly violated: and this first transgression, not having been prevented, not having been immediately atoned for, was sufficient very seriously

seriously to inculcate the Roman government ; but it was followed by a second crime which decided the ruin of the papacy.

Among those by whom the French ambassador was surrounded, and who co-operated with him in checking the effervescence of the insurgents and particularly the blind fury of the pontiff's satellites, was general Duphot, so honourably distinguished by his brilliant courage. He sprang toward that infuriate band who had already immolated so many unfortunate victims in the courts and the vestibule and even on the stair-cases of the French palace ; and that young hero, whom Hymen was preparing to unite within few days with the sister of general Buonaparte, fell the victim of his generous devotion, under the repeated strokes of the base wretches whose rage he had hoped to appease.

The chevalier Angiolini, the Tuscan minister, had hardly received intelligence of this shocking transaction when he hastened to the minister of France to participate his dangers, and displayed in this critical moment equal prudence and courage. Animated by the same sentiments, the chevalier Azara consigned to oblivion every subject of complaint which he had against the Holy See, and—solely desirous of serving it at the same time that he afforded to the French a new testimony of his affection, and to the city of Rome a fresh proof of his prudence and firmness—he flew to the Vatican.

The pope was sick : his secretary of state was wholly ignorant of what had happened at the French ambassador's palace ; and, two hours after the event, the Roman government had not yet taken the slightest step in consequence of it. It was nevertheless by its orders that the detachment of cannibals had been sent against the insurgent crowd ; and after having let them loose into that theatre of blood, it had not appointed any person to watch or direct or restrain them ! Even if the Roman government had been guilty of no other crime than that inconceivable improvidence, could it possibly have escaped the resentment of the French republic ?

After the scene of which the minister Buonaparte had been a witness—at the sight of the lifeless corse of his unfortunate compatriot who had been on the point of becoming his kinsman, and who, after having braved death



death in the field of glory, had received the fatal wound from the hands of an unbridled soldiery—he conceived that the dignity of his character, much more than the care of his personal safety, forbade his longer stay in a place where the most sacred rights were violated, and certain impunity seemed to await the violation.

It would not be credited, if Joseph Buonaparte had not himself affirmed the fact, that fourteen hours were elapsed after the murder of general Duphot, before a single Roman presented himself to inquire into the state of affairs.

During that interval the French ambassador had written several letters to the secretary of state to acquaint him with his firm determination of quitting Rome, and to demand of him the necessary passports. The cardinal Doria vainly attempted to prevail on him to stay: the ambassador departed the next morning for Florence, whence he transmitted to the French directory a narrative of what had happened in Rome. He took charge of a dispatch from the cardinal to the marquis Massimi, at that time the sovereign pontiff's minister in Paris. In that dispatch Doria deplored, in the name of the holy father and in his own, an event which it had, by his account, been impossible for them either to foresee or prevent. "You are to request of the directory," said he to the marquis, "that they will demand whatever satisfaction they think proper. To demand and to obtain it, will be the same thing: for neither his holiness nor I, nor the court of Rome will ever be easy in mind until certain that the directory is satisfied."

It will naturally be asked how the pope and his secretary were employed during that scene which now called forth those expressions of their tardy repentance. Every circumstance proves that cardinal Doria, incapable of guiding the reins of government in difficult times, and equally incapable of any participation in a conspiracy of which he must have fallen one of the first victims, had made no preparation, and that, at the moment of the explosion, his reason was quite bewildered. As to the pope, the state of his health, if we may believe Doria's account, did not allow that he should even be informed of the affair before night. It appears there-  
fore

fore that neither the one nor the other was chargeable on this occasion with any thing more than very great improvidence. Accordingly, the ambassador Buonaparte, though fired with just resentment, did not inculcate either the pontiff or his minister: he even thought it his duty, at the moment of his departure, to give the secretary of state a last testimony of his personal esteem, and to assure him that he would retain "the most cordial remembrance of the character and the conduct, and the polite and friendly behaviour of the cardinal Doria, whose goodness of heart was not in its proper sphere among the irreconcilable enemies of the French name who still governed the court of Rome."

Scarcely was Joseph Buonaparte gone from the city when the chevalier Azara was earnestly entreated in the pope's name to exert his efforts to recall him. The Spanish minister, whose interposition it was now somewhat too late to invoke, contented himself with answering that he was prohibited to take any further concern in the affairs of Rome. Besides, Joseph Buonaparte was very little disposed to yield to solicitations of that kind. He thus wrote on the subject to the rulers of the French republic—"This government does not swerve from its usual character. Crafty and rash in compassing criminal deeds, base and groveling after they have been committed, it now lies prostrate at the feet of the minister Azara, entreating him to come to me at Florence, and bring me back to Rome."

A government thus appreciated could not hope to obtain pardon; and vengeance closely followed the crime which it had at least suffered to be perpetrated.

In the infliction of that vengeance the Cis-Alpines took the lead. Scarcely were they informed of what had happened at Rome, when loud accents of indignation resounded in their political assemblies and in their private societies. At Milan, on every side, were heard the cries of "Death to the assassin pontiff! Vengeance to our deliverers!" In the constitutional circle a levy of troops was recommended, for the purpose of making war on the pope: and while the Italian and French forces were already on their march toward his dominions,

letters

letters from Milan said—" Soon shall that Tiber which  
 " is stained with the blood of our brethren—that Capitol  
 " inhabited by assassins priests—that Field of Mars which  
 " blushes to be trodden by a nation of slaves—be purified  
 " from the accumulated crimes and ignominy and fer-  
 " vitude of twenty centuries."

Meantime dismay and consternation had seized upon all those who stood in conspicuous stations in Rome. The government dispatched couriers in every direction, and strove to interest in its favour the courts of Florence, of Naples, and of Vienna. More suspicious and implacable than at any former period—now, at a time when its own feebleness and the impending danger should have enforced the practice of at least mildness and moderation, it multiplied the number of imprisonments; and, mingling religious mummary with political rigor, it suspended all theatric entertainments, appointed a jubilee, and prayers, and sermons.

Recovered from its first stupor, it puts into circulation a *most true and faithful* statement, in which it depicts the conduct of the French in the most odious colours. A Roman journalist carries still farther the audacity of unblushing impudence: he announces to the universe that the pope is preparing to " arm a hundred and sixty thousand men, and to drive France back within her ancient limits." He formally gives the lie to the editor of the Florence gazette: " What must," says he, " above  
 " every thing else, excite the indignation of the public,  
 " is the intolerable impudence with which some people  
 " have endeavoured, by a heap of falsehoods, to blacken  
 " the conduct of the pontifical government, on the occasion of an event which the time and the circumstances and a connected series of facts render so notorious as to create an impossibility of its affording room  
 " for either misconception or controversy. But the  
 " world will see who has been the author of the popular commotions, what means have been employed, what schemes have been concerted, to realise the  
 " plan of producing a revolution among the people of  
 " Rome, ever faithful to their God and to their sovereign. A glance of the eye cast over Italy will  
 " be sufficient to furnish a refutation of such calumnies,  
 " and to prove the moderation and forbearance of the  
 " pontifical

“ pontifical minister. It is only necessary to observe  
 “ in what manner and during how long a period that  
 “ government has, through the love of peace, exhibited  
 “ to Europe the spectacle of the most painful humili-  
 “ liations, the greatest sacrifices, the most deplorable  
 “ condition,” &c.

From the transactions that had preceded the murder of Duphot which was no more than the bloody catastrophe of a tedious drama, it becomes easy to appreciate this language, no less hypocritical than insolent.

General Berthier was directed to avenge the French republic. Arriving at Ancona on the twenty-fifth of January, 1798, he immediately marched forward at the head of several columns of Gallic and Cis-Alpine troops. Retarded for a while by the snows of the Apennine, he advanced toward Rome, as if he were traversing the departments of the French republic.

Could he meet with any resistance? The pope was sunk into a state of weakness approaching to imbecility: the rest of the Romans either were lethargised by the same stupor, or impatiently expected the arrival of the French. Some defensive measures were however adopted by the terrified members of the Roman government. The cardinals, who still preserved some remains of courage, held frequent congregations, and deliberated whether they ought to flee or await the enemy. They still struggled to retain the reins of the empire which were ready to escape from their enfeebled grasp. They sent commissioners into the Campagna di Roma and to the adjacent coast, where the people complained of the dearth of provisions and their bad quality.

In the interval of expectancy preceding the arrival of the French, a more animated contest was carried on between the mummeries of superstition and the efforts of patriotism. While the streets were paraded in every direction by processions, the walls were covered with satiric placards\*. While the Madonnas shed tears in answer to the vows addressed to them, portraits of general Buonaparte were distributed among the people, with the inscription,

\* Posting-bills.

inscription, "This is the true likeness of the holy saviour of the world."

Berthier had caused his approach to be announced by a proclamation which had terrified the one party and inspired the other. "A French army," said he, "is now on its march toward Rome. I declare that its only object is to chastise the murderers of the brave Duphot, the same persons who have embroiled their hands in the blood of the unfortunate Bassville, and who have forgotten the respect which they owed to the ambassador of the French republic. The Roman people, who have had no participation in those deeds of horror, shall, in the French army, find protectors and friends."

Encouraged by these assurances, the people assembled in the *Campo-Vaccinò*, under the auspices of some chiefs, such as Riganti, a lawyer distinguished by his talents, and by his resentment against Pius—the duke Bonelli, who had travelled much, and had brought back to Rome the ideas of liberty—a certain Pignatelli, a Neapolitan, nephew to the marquis Gallo, who had recently quitted the service of the emperor, and for some time, with undaunted zeal, professed revolutionary principles at Rome. In this assembly the Roman people proclaimed their independence on the twenty-seventh of Pluviose (February 15). Immediately the tree of liberty was planted in front of the Capitol, and in all the public squares.

General Berthier lay encamped at the gates of Rome. At noon he received a deputation from the Roman people, acquainting him with their revolution, and communicating to him the plan of a provisional government which they had adopted.

Soon after, preceded by martial music and all the grenadiers of his army, and followed by his staff-officers and a hundred horsemen from each regiment of his cavalry, he proceeded directly to the Capitol, traversing the crowded throng of a countless multitude of the people, among whom, however, if we may venture to believe the assertion of spectators worthy of credit, the number of those whom curiosity alone had attracted to the spot was much greater than that of the real lovers of liberty.

Arrived

Arrived at the Capitol, general Bertheir pronounced a harangue suited to the occasion—a harangue, whose Laconic energy entitles it to be transmitted to posterity—

“ Ye manès of the Catoes, of the Pompeys, of the Brutefes, of the Ciceroes, of the Hórtensiuses! receive the homage of free Frenchmen in that Capitol where you so oft have defended the rights of the people, and shed lustre on the Roman republic.”

“ Those decendents of the Gauls, with the olive of peace in their hands, come to this august place, to re-edify in it the altars of liberty erected by the first of the Bruiufes.”

“ And you, Roman people, who have now recovered your legitimate rights!—recollect that blood which flows in your veins! survey those monuments of glory by which you are surrounded! resume your pristine greatness, and the virtues of your progenitors\*!”

A spectacle so novel, a harangue so worthy of those scenes which awaked the grandest recollections, might well be expected to electrify, and did in fact electrify, the soul of every individual present.

The ceremony concluded, general Bertheir was re-conducted to his camp amid peals of acclamation still more spontaneous and more universal than those which had hailed him on his entrance into the city.

Some personages of eminence in Rome—the crafty cardinal della Sommaglia, at that time cardinal-vicar—Arrigoni, who was president of the *annona*—and the young prince Giustiniani, joined by the Neapolitan minister, Belmonte-Pignatelli—had been sent by the pope to the French general. They hoped to mollify him, to obtain of him terms of accommodation. Pius, or those  
who

\* This last paragraph differs, in my original, from the concluding sentence given by Mr. Duppa in page 103 of his “Brief Account of the Subversion of the Papal Government.”—Without pretending to decide which is the genuine speech of Berthier, I have contented myself with faithfully translating my text.

who made use of his name \*, had indulged the hope that, at the expense of a contribution of a few millions and the sacrifice of two provinces already infected with the revolutionary spirit, the Holy See might yet be able to redeem its safety. But the firmness of Berthier dissipated those illusions: he refused to admit a deputation from a government which had already ceased to exist, and declared that he would receive none except from the Roman people.

That people, in effect, had created a provisional government, and, reviving the highest dignity of ancient Rome, had elected seven consuls, among whom Riganti and Bonelli, the most conspicuous of their chiefs, were not forgotten

\* During this crisis, Pius concealed himself from every eye. He remained in the Vatican, surrounded by some injudicious and obscure counsellors whose names do not deserve to be rescued from oblivion. The deputies who were sent to Berthier did not see the pontiff either previous to their departure or after their return. Every command, every information, passed through the medium of cardinal Doria.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER XXIX.

*Consequences of the Entry of the French into Rome.*

**A**S soon as the ancient government saw that its hopes had been disappointed, those who had taken the most active part in its operations, or who had recently been its most culpable agents, perceived the danger which threatened them. Several escaped from the peril by flight—such as the cardinals Albani and Busca—a certain captain Amadeo, who commanded the company that had fired upon Duphot—the corporal Marinelli, who had given him the first wound—a certain English banker, by name Jenkins. With respect to the cardinal Braschi, he was at Naples on a political mission in conjunction with monsignor Galeppi, and took good care not to return.

At this period, which immediately preceded the arrival of the French, Rome presented a spectacle truly curious to an attentive spectator. Here were seen priests bitterly inveighing against the emperor, and crying out on every side that he had deceived them: there the  
members



members of the ancient government, uncertain what distant asylum they might hope to reach with impunity, concealed themselves in Rome itself. The bishops, not thinking themselves safe in the provinces of the state, came to take refuge in the capital. A great portion of the people remained quiet, and silently awaited their doom. In several quarters of the city, the indignation excited by the fanatic devotees secretly fermented, and broke out in knife-stabs even more frequent than usual. The miracle of the Madonna opening her eyes, which had been so ingeniously contrived by monsignor Galeppi, was more than once repeated, but now began to lose its effect and made fewer dupes.

And how was the pope employed meanwhile? His holiness some times gave way to the transports of grief: but much oftener, motionless and pensively silent, he astonished those around him by his apparent serenity. Was it philosophy? was it resignation to the will of heaven? or was it a mere apathy resulting from the enfeebled state of his organs? The question was not decided at the time, and will perhaps remain for ever undecided.

General Berthier having come to take up his residence in Rome, assumed in fact the reins of the government, which as yet had only nominal chiefs.

His first step was to cause a funeral ceremony to be celebrated in honour of the manès of the unfortunate Dufhot. A mausoleum was erected to the deceased chief in the piazza of the Vatican; and that monument, surrounded with cypress-trees and illumined by funeral torches, was decorated with Latin inscriptions commemorating his warlike talents, his patriotic devotion, and his tragic fall. The urn which inclosed his ashes was placed on an antique column erected in the area of the Capitol.

Not content with these last honours, his manès expected the additional gratification of vengeance. Several of the most active agents of the court of Rome, which in these latter times had rendered itself so odious, were arrested—among others, the prelate Grivelli, governor of Rome, a pacific and moderate man, but who was made responsible for those disorders which he had not been able to prevent—the Benedictine Altieri, nephew to

to the cardinal of that name, and the blindly-devoted tool of the cardinal Albani, that is to say, of the most implacable enemy to the French. Particular severity was exercised against the *fiscal* Barberi, deservedly hated on account of the influence he had acquired, and of the persecutions by which he had harassed all the inhabitants of Rome—whether natives or foreigners, and especially Frenchmen, who appeared to him in the slightest degree to merit the obnoxious title of *patriots*: not, however that he was naturally ill-disposed; for even his enemies, while they condemned the severity of his character, did justice to its integrity. All his exceptionable actions arose from his prejudices and his ignorance: exclusively versed in criminal jurisprudence, he was unacquainted either with political affairs or with mankind. He was imprisoned and banished. He would have experienced more rigorous treatment, if the chevalier Azara, who nevertheless had reason to be dissatisfied with him, had not interceded in his favour.

One of Berthier's first operations was to suppress the odious prerogative of the right of asylum enjoyed by churches and other privileged places, and to banish all French emigrants from the territories of the Roman republic.

The greatest difficulty was the task of composing in a suitable manner the new government of the Roman republic. To accomplish that object, general Berthier adopted in the first instance the most prudent expedient. He consulted the chevalier Azara, who, in addition to uncommon sagacity, possessed a perfect knowledge of the local circumstances: but the Spanish minister had many motives for wishing to decline so delicate a business; nor did he consent to take a part in it until urged by the reiterated solicitations of the French commissioners. He proposed then a sort of mixed government in which all the classes of Rome might have participated: he furnished a list composed of three cardinals, two princes, two of the most celebrated lawyers, some bankers, and some agricultors. It was adopted; but its duration had not extended beyond the space of a few days, when a multitude of patriots, more zealous than enlightened, crowded round the French commissioners, and obliged them to make a new choice. Under  
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the title of consulate, a directory was created, consisting of six members, inclusive of the president. The lawyer Riganti was the person who filled the presidential chair in this first consulate, which had for its secretary-general a Frenchman distinguished by his talents and his patriotic zeal, citizen Bassal, antecedently a constitutional *curé* at Versailles, and afterward a member of the national convention.

The government, however, was yet only provisional: previous to its definitive organisation, it was thought necessary to wait the arrival of three new French commissioners, who had been chosen with particular care by the directory, and furnished with all the information that such a mission required.

From the very day of general Berthier's entry into Rome the ancient government may date the epoch of its overthrow. It nevertheless struggled for some days in the arms of death. Such of the cardinals as had not already fled from the city on the wings of terror, were assembled in council, and seemed disposed still to uphold the authority of the pontiff. They were preparing to celebrate the anniversary of his coronation: but how poignant their grief when they witnessed the march of the Roman and French patriots who were proceeding to plant, with the most solemn pomp, the tree of liberty before the statue of Marcus Aurelius! A heart-felt conviction told them that their last hour was arrived: the Gallic army were the real sovereigns of Rome, and could admit no partition of authority; nor did there any longer remain to the Sacred College even the resource of a capitulation. Humbled, disarmed, destitute of support and of friends, they saw themselves compelled to surrender at discretion.

Behold them now in the deepest affliction marching to the Vatican, the centre of their fallen empire. With mournful eye they survey those vestibules, those halls, which they had never been wont to traverse ungreeted by the homage of a bowing throng. Those cardinals, so clad with their dignity, find themselves suddenly denuded of all those brilliant externals which heretofore intoxicated their pride. They accompany with their profound but smothered sighs these words of the scripture, which hitherto they had had on their lips alone, and of

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which

which they now too late feel the truth—" *Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas* \*." The glory, the influence, the power, the splendor, with which they dazzled the vulgar and were themselves dazzled—all is eclipsed. Those rivals of sceptered monarchs will henceforward deem themselves thrice happy to be mingled and lost in the crowd of the meanest individuals, and to convert their obscurity into a shield to screen them from the animosity of those who triumph in their humiliation. With melancholy voice they pronounce their "absolute renunciation of the temporal government."

But they have not yet reached the period of their calamities. At first they are quietly enough permitted to attend to the sale of their effects, previous to their departure from a city where they no longer have any thing to expect but mortifications and persecutions. But soon the storm gathers around them: the new government is organised, and successively obliterates every vestige of the ancient, especially every trace of fanaticism. The cardinalitian dignity, even the presence of the cardinals in Rome, was deemed incompatible with the new order of things. The moment of extreme rigor was now arrived: none of the cardinals were spared, except those whose great age or infirmities claimed some lenity. Two of their number in particular—Albani and Busca—had no room to expect any favour. They had been the most active instruments in the last deeds of perfidy committed by the court of Rome; and they had both hastily fled to shelter themselves in a place of safety. Their property was confiscated: the statues and other precious effects contained in the famous Villa Albani were exposed to sale, as was likewise every thing that Busca possessed at Santa Agatha de' Monti.

Several others, who seemed to have less reason to be alarmed, had also adopted the resolution of fleeing before the persecution which their anticipative fears apprehended. Some of them, however, would have had claims to indulgence, since they had not forfeited their title to esteem. Such were Archetti, who had not derogated from the character of prudent moderation which he had gained by his missions in the North—Antici, who

\* Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.

who had sufficient foresight to dissuade from every measure tending to alienate France—Altieri, peaceable and destitute of influence:—such in particular was the cardinal Caprara. This prelate, after having been nuncio at Vienna, had, contrary to the pontiff's wishes, obtained the Roman purple on the emperor's nomination. Pius, who was extremely susceptible of disadvantageous impressions, had never pardoned him that triumph. Caprara nevertheless was a member of that numerous congregation who during the grand crisis directed the public and military operations; and he constantly opposed the unwise measures approved by the majority. He possessed judgment, sagacity, as great a share of probity as an Italian cardinal *could* possess, and several of the other qualities which constitute the statesman. France had no personal grudge against him: yet he thought it improper for him to remain at Rome, and retired to Bologna, his native place, where his family were held in high estimation. Pignatelli and Archinto fled for safety, the one to Naples, the other to Tuscany. Gerdyl, perhaps the only individual among the cardinals who had, together with the faith, retained also the love of poverty and the simple manners of the primitive church—Gerdyl, after having abdicated the Roman purple, went to seek an asylum at the court of the Sardinian monarch, whose youth he had trained by his instructions. Renuccini witnessed the confiscation of his house and all his property.—Altieri and Rezzonico were confined to their habitations by severe illness.—Valenti lay at the point of death.

Almost all the other members of the Sacred College experienced treatment which several of them at least had not reason to expect. We will particularly quote the instance of the cardinal Doria. General Cervoni, governor of Rome, who lived with the cardinal, had counselled him to make his escape, because, as he informed him, all the cardinals who were found in the city would be arrested. "I will not flee," replied Doria: "I have nothing to reproach myself with: I will participate the doom of my colleagues." Accordingly he was arrested as well as they and several prelates and some Roman nobles.

The cardinals were in the first instance conducted to

the convent of the *Convertite* at Rome. Beside Doria whom his generous devotion had not saved, their number consisted of Antonelli, one of the most enlightened, yet one of the most fanatic—the cardinal-vicar della Sompagnia whose intentions were at least liable to suspicion—Borgia, distinguished by his talents and his taste for the sciences, and who might have been spared without any inconvenience—Roverella, still less dangerous than Borgia—Carandini, prefect of the *Buon-Governo*, who by his tyrannic administration had acquired a stronger title to the hatred even of the Romans themselves than of their emancipators—Vincenti, very inimical to France, but whom his fears had at an early period rendered extremely circumspect, and now rendered equally supple in adversity, &c.—Archetti had, somewhat too late, attempted to escape: but he was overtaken in his flight, and conducted back to Rome under the escort of a piquet of cavalry.

Mattei had deceived the hopes derived from his conversion effected by general Buonaparte. The negotiator of Tolentino was no longer the conciliating mediator who had saved the Holy See, and who had been pardoned for some transgressions in consideration of the pious and honest simplicity of his manners. His ardent zeal had blazed forth afresh at the sight of those calamities which were pouring upon the Roman church. He considered as incompatible with orthodoxy the civic oath which the citizens of the Roman republic were obliged to take: he endeavoured, by his preaching, to dissuade his diocesans from the commission of that impious act: he was arrested, sent into banishment, and his property was confiscated. He retired to the country beyond the Po, which lay within the boundaries of his diocese of Ferrara. And the famous cardinal Maury—what will become of him amid this storm of persecution which might have been expected to reach him among the first? He had the dexterity to shelter himself from its fury. Concealed, during the grand crisis, in his diocese of Montefiascone, as soon as he thought the tempest overblown, he takes in open day the road to Florence; and his daring audacity is crowned with success. At the distance of few leagues from Rome he stopped to change horses at the very moment when the three new French commissioners

missioners had arrived—the citizens Daunou, Monge, and Florent. He was recognised: but it remains uncertain whether he himself was aware of the recognition: at least his imperturbable features were not seen to undergo any alteration. One of the commissioners walks round his carriage, views him, and, fully convinced of the identity of his person, can hardly refrain from giving vent to his detestation of one of the bitterest enemies of the French revolution. He regrets that he has not with him an armed force to execute instantaneous justice on his eminence in a territory where the inviolability of the cardinalian character is now no more than a chimæra. He deliberates: but the horses are put to—both carriages are in readiness—and they set off in different directions. Thus Maury escaped an imminent danger, of which he did not even seem to entertain a suspicion, but of which he may perhaps be apprised by the perusal of these lines.

Let us however acknowledge a fact which the strongest prejudice cannot deny; and let us, in this one instance, anticipate the severe language of history. All the cardinals, guilty or innocent, were promiscuously involved in the same indiscriminate proscription by a blind animosity by no means congenial to the intentions of the French government or those of its principal agents. The majority of those princes of the church were objects of odium, or at least of contempt and ridicule: but means were now found to render them interesting. With very few exceptions, all those who securely awaited the arrival of the French were the victims of avarice rather than of hatred. The chief crime for which they were compelled to make atonement was their opulence, real or supposed; and if the cardinal Gerdyl, for instance, was spared, it was only because the simple and modest life which he led in almost absolute indigence, had sufficiently notified to the world his inability to pay the price of his ransom.

The greater number of those who had been confined in the convent of the *Convertite* at Rome were soon afterward transferred to Cività-Vecchia. Already mention was made of transporting them to some remote island: but they soon learned by what means they might obtain their pardon. A few of their number with considerable

considerable firmness opposed that species of persecution, for which they were not prepared ; all the others deemed themselves supremely happy in the opportunity of purchasing their liberty by great sacrifices. Several, as Altieri and Vincenti, were seen to renounce the Roman purple, late so envied, now suddenly become so dangerous ; others, to request as a favour that they might be designated by the title of "*citizen*" in the passports which were granted to them for their exit from the territories of the Ecclesiastical State.

After having, the greater part of them, suffered insult, imprisonment, spoliation, they hastened to seek, at a distance from Rome, some asylum where they might enjoy the only blessing to which they now aspired—tranquillity. Some took refuge at Florence, others at Milan, at Bologna, at Naples, and in the states of Venice. Hardly was the new government formed, when there no longer existed a trace of the ancient, no longer a cardinal to be seen in Rome except some individuals of that rank who were detained by their great age or their infirmities\*.

With respect to the individuals of the great families of Rome who did not belong to the sacerdotal body, they submitted with a tolerable share of resignation to that catastrophe which reduced them to a level with the crowd of citizens. They were not enemies whom it could be difficult to subdue: their education, the effeminate life they had dozed away in the lap of opulence and beyond the reach of dangers and alarms, had not prepared their souls for the exertions of that energy which could have rendered them formidable opponents and worthy objects of persecution. On the arrival of the French, several of them were heard to say with humble frankness, " We have been accustomed to obey: to whom our obedience shall be paid, is of little consequence to us, provided we be allowed to retain our property and our lives." Accordingly they were almost universally

\* Certain phrenetics, who are unsusceptive of any other sentiment than hatred, will perhaps bestow on us their reproaches for having expressed our commiseration of the cardinals. To such censors we give this brief reply—Even cardinals are men as well as we, and, when they are unfortunate, have claims to our sympathy. We know none who are unworthy of pity, except those who have never felt it.



fully spared: their houses, their furniture, their villas, every thing belonging to them, remained inviolate; nor did they suffer any other loss than that of their titles and dignities. Some of their number even espoused the Roman revolution with every appearance of cordial attachment. Such, in particular, was the prince Borghese, one of the richest individuals in Rome, and who was elected a member of the senate: such also was the young prince Giustiniani, who is now at Paris as representative of the new republic, and who has disarmed malevolence by the temperate prudence of his conduct and the gentleness of his manners.

Those few against whom severity was exercised, had deserved that treatment by engaging in plots which the circumstances of the times rendered unjustifiable. The duchess of Lante, having been convicted of carrying on a counter-revolutionary correspondence, was for some time detained in confinement. The marquis del Monte-Santa-Maria, by taking part in one of those insurrections which broke out in various quarters of the Ecclesiastical State—that of Città di Castellano—excited the rage of the patriots; and his country-seat was demolished. The expenses of the war, together with those of the new administration, rendered necessary the imposition of extraordinary taxes; and their weight fell, as might naturally have been expected, on the most opulent families of Rome.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER XXX.

*Fate of PIUS and of his Nephews.*

AS to the pope and his family, amid this general subversion, their fate was the more deplorable as they fell from a more exalted station. The sympathy which they might have excited was considerably diminished by the recollection of their excesses, or at least of their errors. But there are certain bounds to resentment even in those bosoms which have been the most deeply wounded, even in hearts of the most rancorous mould. The pontiff's two nephews sank in one day from opulence to beggary. The cardinal Braschi, less greedy than his brother, derived the principal part of his fortune from the rich benefices that his uncle had accumulated on him. In consequence of the proscription, those benefices were speedily vacated, and he had reason to envy the scanty pittance of a village priest. With regard to the duke his brother, the voice of exaggeration has not perhaps swelled the amount of his extortions, or breathed additional infamy on the disgraceful means which he had employed to enrich himself: but his territorial possessions, at least, had certainly been overrated. His movable property was immense: his luxury of every kind equalled that

that of a little sovereign: but we think ourselves justified in asserting, that, in landed estates, he never possessed above forty thousand Roman crowns of annual income. Within a few days after the revolution in Rome, nought remained to him but the ribbons and crosses with which he had suffered himself to be accoutred by various sovereigns of Europe; and he even thought himself thrice happy to find a temporary shelter in Tuscany from the persecutions by which he was forced to atone for his avidity, and for the scandalous use which he had made of his power. His pictures, his prints, his antiques, all the treasures of his museum, his rich furniture, every thing of his that could be found, was confiscated and exposed to sale. His lands, particularly those which he had acquired in the Pontine marshes, were treated as the acquisitions of victory, and sold for the benefit of the conquering army.

His wife, known by the title of the duchess of Nemi, was less harshly treated than he. At first, however, she was the object of peculiar severity: she was arrested and thrown into confinement; being considered as a person whom it was indispensably necessary to secure. But this was a mistaken idea: she was therefore soon restored to liberty, and even permitted to bring forward her claims. The French commissioners found her resigned, suppliant, and hardly seeming to recollect that she had lately been the first lady in Rome. She began by demanding of them sixty thousand crowns which she said she had brought as her marriage-portion: the sum was reduced to thirty thousand. She then claimed for her daughter a movable property to the amount of about thirty thousand crowns: on this score she was allowed ten thousand. What she was suffered to retain of her personal property may be valued at an equal sum. She kept the jewels, the diamonds, with which she was abundantly provided. Of twenty carriages which she had owned, she was permitted to choose two of the most elegant. She was indulged with the privilege of realising in national property the thirty thousand crowns granted to her—an indulgence which enabled her to retain a part of the beautiful estate she possessed at Tivoli. After the completion of these economic arrangements, which were more favourable to her than she could have reasonably expected, she requested

requested leave to retire to Fermo in the marquisate of Ancona, whither she was invited by the man—not her husband—who was to console her for so many misfortunes. To this request she received a refusal; not that there existed a wish to thwart her in the indulgence of that inclination which certainly was not her first essay: but the commissioners did her the very gratuitous honour of supposing that it was important that she should not remove from the vicinity of Rome. She obtained permission to retire to Tivoli, where she has since lived sufficiently free from molestation.

It remains for us to speak of the chief of that family, which, by a series of imprudent acts, suddenly fell from the pinnacle of greatness to the depths of the most deplorable humiliation. Pius, who, by his own obstinacy and the evil counsels to which he had given ear, had prepared the way for the overthrow of the Roman government, remained almost entirely ignorant of the catastrophe which completed that event. He was yet overwhelmed with the consternation caused by the entry of the avengers of Duphot, when he learned that the cardinals had abdicated their temporal authority: he saw general Cervoni enter, who at this time held the chief command in Rome: he came to announce to the pontiff that the people had thought proper to resume their sovereignty.—“And my dignity!” exclaimed his holiness in the accent of profound grief.—“It is too intimately connected with religion, which the people are determined to preserve inviolate. They have so expressed their resolution in the solemn act which has been proclaimed in their name; and they promise to make for you a provision suitable to your rank.”—“And my person!” continued Pius.—“It is in perfect safety; and they engage to furnish a guard of a hundred and twenty men for its protection.”—Pius was silent, and assumed an air of resignation.

But the hopes which this beginning had encouraged him to conceive were soon disappointed. Notwithstanding the wish so formally and solemnly announced by the people of Rome in favour of liberty, that capital harboured a considerable number of mal-contents—of sincere fanatics, who considered the fall of the papal throne in

no other light than as the downfall of religion—many hypocrites who from motives of vanity and ambition were interested in supporting the ancient order of things. Under these circumstances, the presence of the pope might give birth to conspiracies. Though he had, while vested with sovereignty, been viewed with the eyes of hatred or at least of indifference, his misfortunes had now rendered him an object of sympathetic interest. The French commissioners thought it indispensable to the public safety that he should be removed from Rome, and even from the Ecclesiastical State. He was conducted to Tuscany, not at the request of the grand-duke, but with his consent, which that prince would have been very glad to have the liberty of refusing. He was sensible that the presence of such a guest might become troublesome, and even dangerous. Pius was at first conducted to Sienna.

Here he lived in peace, and forgotten by almost every one except the devotees and some curious persons, when an earthquake shook the place which he had chosen for his retreat, and threw down several buildings. Pius lodged in the convent of Saint Barbara: but, at the moment when the shock was felt, he happened to be walking in one of the public gardens of the city. He was hastily conveyed from within the walls of Sienna, to a country-house called by the name of *Hell*; which circumstance gave rise to the sarcasms of the undevout who had not felt compassion for his misfortune. After some time he was conducted to Florence. At the moment of his entering this city, the sky, which is usually so serene in Tuscany, was overcast with heavy clouds and the rain fell in torrents. Malignity, which is so prompt, especially in Italy, to seize every opportunity of exercising itself, did not fail to observe that the pope brought bad weather with him wherever he came.

His first interview with the grand-duke, which took place in the presence of the marquis Manfredini, was on both sides accompanied by marks of melting tenderness. The grand-duke in particular was moved even in the shedding of tears: but he was not insensible of the inconvenience which might result to him from keeping the pope in his capital. In a few days after his arrival, Pius was conducted

conducted to a Carthusian monastery, at the distance of two miles from Florence.

The fallen pontiff did not appear so deeply affected by his situation as might have been supposed: his health, far from being impaired by a catastrophe which would have caused any other person in like circumstances to die with grief, seemed to be in a more flourishing state. His relish for the pleasures of the table accompanied him to his solitude: and, on that subject, the following anecdote is related by credible witnesses—On his arrival at the Carthusian convent, his holiness, who, among the small suite of servants by whom he was accompanied, had not forgotten his cook, gave him permission to take his station in the conventual kitchen, and there ordered him to prepare for his table delicate viands which formed a striking contrast with the frugal fare of the monks. The latter, mortified no doubt by the comparison, pretended to be scandalised at the holy father's sensuality, and pronounced it to be the source of those calamities which desolated the church. The cook warmly defended the cause of his useful profession, and, in revenge of ill-humour shown by those recluses, slipped, unknown to them, a bit of meat into their peas-soup\*. This horrible plot being discovered, the monks utter shrieks of indignation, which reach the ears of his holiness. Pius fancies he still hears the revolutionary storm growl around him: he inquires what cause has excited it: to avoid the repetition of such a scene, he orders that his kitchen be henceforward separate from that of the monks; and they congratulate themselves on no longer having before their eyes the scandalous exhibition of the sovereign pontiff's epicurism.

Vanity, as another anecdote proves—and that particular species of it which was the least excusable in a pontiff and an old man—the vanity which is connected with external accomplishments—did not abandon Pius in

\* The Carthusians, observing a perpetual Lent, never eat flesh meat: and, according to the notions of their church, the smallest particle of flesh, or the smallest drop of its juice, mingled with any quantity of fasting-fare, is sufficient to contaminate the whole mass so completely that whoever tastes of it is guilty of the no small crime of violating the fast!

in his retreat. There lived at Florence a young Hungarian painter who was desirous of the honour of drawing his holiness's portrait, with the intention, as he said, of presenting it to the empress. He was conducted to the holy father, who accepted his offer with a sort of enthusiasm. "Let your pencil," said he to the young artist, "revive that bloom and animated complexion which is somewhat faded through age and chagrin: paint me in scarlet robes, to give the greater relief to my features." The painter is said to have paid docile obedience to the directions of the pontiff's vanity; and Pius, even in the season of disgrace, still found a *flatterer*. It is asserted that his eyes dwelt with pleasure on that portrait, which, some years before, would have been a very good likeness, and which, by an innocent deception, carried him back to a less advanced age, and to happier days.

These anecdotes will to many people afford sufficient ground for dispensing with that pity which they might otherwise be inclined to bestow on him. Can we consider him as an object of compassion, when we see him so resigned, so contented, still so well disposed to relish the only indulgences that have been left within his reach?

It is moreover asserted, that, instead of repining at his fate, he has several times protested that he had renounced all hope of ever revisiting Rome, and that his utmost wish was to conclude his days in peace in the Carthusian monastery. He enjoys there likewise some other consolations: he is not forgotten by all mankind in his obscure retreat: he has there received magnificent presents from all quarters. One day he saw ten purses brought in to him, each containing five hundred crowns. The donator chose to keep his name secret: all that is known is that he was a Florentine. The present was accompanied by a note containing these words, "To provide ten shirts for his holiness." Another Florentine caused a sedan-chair to be constructed for him, richly gilt, decorated with all the symbols of the church, and displaying in front a silver plate inscribed with these words, which their author considered as prophetic, "*Post fata resurgo*." Many prelates, and almost all the chiefs of the catholic church, have made him considerable

ble offers which he has had the generosity to decline. But he accepts without scruple the favours tendered by sovereign princes. He receives a monthly pension of three thousand crowns from a neighbouring court: the king of Spain continues faithfully observant of his former custom of annually sending to him an abundant provision of drugs, wines, and tobacco: he has also given him testimonies of affectionate regard which Pius has much more sensibly felt; for that monarch has not only directed the cardinal Lorenzana to continue to reside near the pontiff, but has also sent him a dispatch in which he assures him that he has not ceased to consider and to respect Pius VI. as "head of the catholic church."

The serenity which Pius enjoys in his retreat has nevertheless been clouded by a transaction which indeed was well calculated to awake whatever small spark of sensibility he yet retains. That nephew, dear to his vanity still more than to his affection—that nephew, who was the object and the principal accomplice of those faults for which Pius is now forced to atone—was among the foremost in fleeing from Rome. He had come to his uncle, and seemed to take a delight in administering to him some consolations. But the grand-duke did not think he could with propriety tolerate him in his dominions. Braschi, when preparing for his departure from Tuscany, took the liberty of repairing a part of his losses by carrying off from the holy father a considerable sum of money which the pious munificence of the faithful had destined for the supreme head of the church, and not for the prince of the Pontine marshes. Pius, fired with indignation at such treatment from a cherished nephew, resumed a momentary energy to lavish on him, instead of affectionate adieux, his paternal imprecations. The reign of nepotism could not have terminated in a more scandalous catastrophe.

Not alone did earthquakes and ingratitude disturb Pius's repose in the different retreats to which he had been consigned. The policy of the French government also gave him more than one cause of disquietude. It was not that he conducted himself in the Carthusian monastery at Florence in such manner as to awake suspicion: there existed no reason to apprehend that those persons



persons whom he had been permitted to take with him at his departure from Rome, would become the instruments of intrigue or fanaticism: they were a chamberlain, some of his gentlemen, some prelates, a physician—men as little formidable on the score of talents as of influence. The pope himself led and still continues to lead a uniform, peaceable, and sequestered life: he retires to rest at an early hour: he rises very late, and passes the remainder of the day in eating, drinking, writing, or dictating to his secretary. His intellects are enfeebled by age even more than by chagrin.

At Sienna he had a kind of ecclesiastic court, and was surrounded by a certain pomp: the faithful still flocked to his presence, and courted the honour of his benedictions. But, since his removal to the Carthusian monastery, his circle has been very circumscribed. He wisely avoids making himself too accessible, and admits the visits only of some devotees or persons attracted to him by curiosity. The Tuscan government, which is deeply interested in watching him to avoid giving any cause of complaint to France, is extremely careful that he maintain no relation of a suspicious nature.

It had proposed to the minister of the French republic that he should name all the persons who were to compose his holiness's household, and should have the inspection of his private conduct. It would have been a circumstance unparalleled in the annals of the Roman church to see her sovereign pontiff under the tutelage of a *heretic*; for our minister at Florence was born a member of the protestant communion. Citizen Reinhart declined that delicate charge: but he is nevertheless equally well apprised of every thing that passes within the Carthusian monastery at Florence.

Notwithstanding all these motives of security, some jealousy has been excited by Pius's residence in the heart of Italy. Apprehensions have been entertained, that, by still continuing so near to those whom he had so long dazzled by the splendor of his dignity, he might, perhaps contrary to his own wishes, awaken their regret, and furnish the ground of some conspiracy. In the month of Thermidor of the sixth year of the republic\*,  
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\* Between July 19 and August 18, 1798.

the French government urged the grand-duke of Tuscany to send him out of his dominions. To our demands the grand-duke replied, "I did not wish for the pope: it was the French commissioners who sent him to me. I would be glad that he were at a distance from Tuscany: but you will not insist on my expelling him. If you desire that he quit the country, every thing shall be made ready for his departure—carriage, inns, ship: but it rests with France to take the charge of conveying him elsewhere." The directory insisted, and caused the following message to be delivered to the grand-duke—"Send him out of Tuscany, or we will hold you responsible for the disturbances which his proximity excites and may yet further excite in Rome."

In consequence of these re-iterated urgencies the court of Tuscany concerted with the cabinet of Vienna to provide a retreat for his holiness in the hereditary states of the house of Austria; and that was the object of the marquis Manfredini's journey to Vienna. Already it was determined that Pius should be conveyed to the convent of Moelk near the Danube, when the affair of the ambassador Bernadotte at Vienna induced an alteration of the plan. It was then proposed to send the pontiff to Spain: but, Charles not consenting to admit him into his kingdom except on conditions which appeared inadmissible, it was next resolved that he should embark for the isle of Sardinia. At this period, his health appearing too much impaired to leave him sufficient strength for a long voyage—his intellects being weakened to such a degree that his reason might have been thought alienated—and all fear being now vanished of those dangers which might arise from his residence in Italy—fewer inconveniences seemed to attend the measure of suffering him to vegetate in the Carthusian monastery near Florence: and it is probable that he will there terminate his existence.

Still stronger is the probability that his temporal reign is at an end. His pontificate—that is to say, his spiritual authority

authority—may yet subsist in the estimation of those who think that the catholic church cannot dispense with a head, nor Jesus Christ with a vicegerent: but, divested of all those external accessories which at once gave it lustre and rendered it dangerous, it may be prolonged for the consolation of the faithful, without disturbing the tranquillity of Europe, and especially that of Italy.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

*Principal Reforms effected in the Roman State by the new Government.*

**A**T length we have reached the period of our career. The pope may yet exist for the comfort of some millions of pious souls: but the Roman government, of which he was the head, is irretrievably overturned, and its disjointed wreck lies scattered in different directions. On the site which it once occupied, a new government has

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been reared. Although its organisation does not make a part of our subject, at least our duty requires that we point out the most material innovations which it produced in what was termed the Ecclesiastical State, and especially in its capital.

It may naturally be concluded, that, immediately after the arrival of the French in Rome, the greater part of those establishments which were linked with the Roman church vanished from sight, and almost all those that constituted a part of the pope's temporal government. The principal edifices received a new destination. In the palace on Mount-Quirinal, known also by the name of Monte-Cavallo, where the Roman pontiff was wont to spend a portion of the year, the directory took their station, and established their offices and all their dependencies: and, although that palace is spaciouly ample, the directory united with it, for their use, the edifice of the *Consulta*.

The Vatican, so long revered as the sanctuary whence issued those spiritual thunders which so oft have shaken Europe—the Vatican, where, to the disgrace of Christian humility, pontifical luxury was displayed amid surrounding master-pieces of the arts, and rich collections of books, manuscripts, and all those productions of genius which reflect honour on the human race—the Vatican, on ceasing to be the residence of a doubly despotic sovereign, was exclusively devoted to the sciences. There was established the new national institute, and there were lodged all its members, notwithstanding the aversion they had testified to that part of Rome, which prejudice had represented as insalubrious.

It may well be imagined that the *propaganda*, the Holy Office, and all the monuments of intolerant fanaticism, have for ever vanished, as likewise every thing not essentially connected with the catholic church. Of those various institutions which disgraced religion at the same time that they enriched its ministers, a single one has survived the universal reform: that is the office of the *datario*, which owes its preservation to motives of policy. The reformers felt that they could not abolish it without materially injuring the prosperity of regenerate Rome, of whose resources a considerable portion was cut off by the revolution, inasmuch as it has for a time banished from her

her walls those foreigners who came to admire and study the master-productions of the arts, and for ever all those who came to beg or purchase favours from the papal court.

The *datario* annually poured into that capital of popery a supply of about three millions of livres—a sum which could not, without serious inconveniences, be withdrawn from a population of a hundred and sixty thousand souls, nearly destitute of all the aids of industry. Besides, it was much less the patrimony of the priests than of a multitude of secretaries and clerks and others who would, by its abolition, have suddenly found themselves deprived of all means of subsistence. In particular, it was the sole dependence of a great number of private individuals, who enjoyed, under the name of *vacabili*, annuities secured by mortgage of the produce of the *datario*. That institution has therefore been suffered to subsist, with only an alteration in its form. The minister of the court of Madrid, previous to his departure from Rome, concurred with the new government in organising a new establishment, whence the bulls for benefices are, in the name of the absent pontiff, issued to the subjects of Spain in nearly similar manner as heretofore. The other potentates who, for the same object, still maintain relations with the Holy See, have likewise made particular arrangements on that head.

Another institution has been annihilated, which was at once interwoven with both the temporal and the spiritual powers, and was incompatible with the new form of government: we mean the functions of the cardinal-vicar.

That officer was not only the pope's vicar-general as bishop of Rome, but also a judge invested with temporal authority, and possessing a jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, which equally extended to the laity as to the clergy. With him lay the direction of the police, and the superintendence of the moral conduct of the citizens. In the exercise of these powers which are liable to so many abuses, he had for his secret agents, a horde of spies who frequently hurried him to arbitrary excesses, by blasting, on the slightest suspicion, the honour of

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married women, and sometimes that of their husbands. The twenty-eight parish-priests of Rome aided him in his functions: they insinuated themselves into families: they pryed into their domestic secrets; and their troublesome vigilance had a stronger tendency to excite scandal than to repress disorder. This species of inquisition ceased on the arrival of the French; and in its stead was substituted a police organised on the republican system.

As to the purely ecclesiastic functions of the pope, those prejudices which the reformers wished to respect would not suffer them to be suspended. They were committed to a prelate whose existence was hardly suspected—the person who, under the title of *vice-gerent*, governed the diocese of Rome properly so called. He has continued to officiate pontifically and with all the former pomp. He began his career by abolishing a great number of festivals: and, although his jurisdiction be confined within the limits of his own bishopric, he extended that abolition to every other diocese in the Roman republic. The French commissioners, far from opposing this kind of usurpation, were glad to see an ecclesiastic authority, legal or not, reform an abuse which the temporal power could not perhaps have attacked with equal success.

The metropolitan church of the catholic world, the church of Saint Peter at Rome, has lost nothing of its former splendor by the change of the government. The illumination of its dome has been several times repeated; and it has even been made to display that spectacle, of such magic effect, known by the appellation of the "*luminous cross*." The reformers did not choose to deprive the Romans of any one of those accessories of their public worship to which they attached so great value. They have even suffered the church of Saint Peter to retain the income of which it was before possessed: its canons enjoy their prebends, hold their chapters, and attend the choir, as in time past. No alteration has been made in the vesture of the priests or friars: the proscription has been confined to the dignity and decorations of the cardinals, because their order was a surreptitious interpolation on the true ecclesiastic hierarchy, and they constituted rather the political than the spiritual council  
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of the pontiff. Respect was paid, in Saint Peter's, even to that famous *sacred door* which was never opened but once in every twenty-five years; and over it are still read the words, "*Pius VI. anno 1775 aperuit et clausit*\*." Nothing was removed except those fastuous inscriptions with which the pontiffs had decorated the profane edifices occupied as the seats of their personal residence: and the portal of Saint Peter's cathedral still informs the passenger that to the care of Paul V. the arts and religion are indebted for that immortal monument.

The new government has particularly preserved two establishments of a purely temporal nature, in which the whole Roman people were interested—the two banks known by the names of the *monte-di-pietà* and the *Spirito-Santo*.

The former of these had originally been nothing more than a bank where money was lent on pawns, and which issued notes or *cedole* representing the value of the property that it received. In process of time it degenerated from its primitive institution: its notes were multiplied far beyond the extent of its capital; and there is no exaggeration in asserting, that, toward the conclusion of Pius's pontificate, above four fifths of that paper-money were unsecured by pledges. The hospital of the *Spirito-Santo*, on the contrary, possesses very considerable revenues. It had acquired great credit, received deposits of money, circulated its notes, and paid them without difficulty on presentation. In these latter times, that salutary institution had been utterly perverted: the amount of its notes far exceeded that of its funds; and nothing but small notes, with barely the balance in specie, could be obtained of it in exchange of its larger paper. To provide for his extravagant expenses, Pius had greatly augmented the debts of that establishment.

It was a task of no small difficulty for the new government to remedy so many disorders, especially at the epoch of a revolution which necessarily demanded an increase of expenditure. At its outset, however, it grasped such resources as circumstances presented to it: in the first place it assumed the inheritance of all the domains belonging to the extinct government, and of the property administered by the Apostolic Chamber: to these were added the possessions of several religious communities,

\* Pius VI. opened and shut [this door] in the year 1775.

ties, whose abolition was effected without violent means. This reform was begun by sending away from Rome all the foreign monks and friars, by whose removal the multitudinous swarms of those pious drones were reduced above one third. In consequence of this measure, several communities were reduced to two or three members : a certain number of these were united in one place ; and the possessions of the vacant convents were declared to be national property. Another species became, by confiscation, French property ; such as those of the duke Braschi. Those of both descriptions were exposed to sale : but the former, inspiring the purchasers with less confidence, were not sold at above seven or eight years' purchase, whereas the latter produced ten or twelve times their annual value.

In the *cedole* the government naturally foresaw a source of embarrassment. To raise their value a little, it strove to open a channel to drain them from circulation, and accepted them at par to the amount of one third of the purchase of the national property. But this measure appearing to throw too great a burden on a treasury which could not afford to suffer any losses, in a short time the *cedole* were not taken at any higher rate than that at which they passed in the ordinary course of exchange.

To supply the city with provisions was one of the principal objects which engaged the anxious attention of the government in its outset ; and here it reaped the bitter fruits of the disastrous administration to which it had succeeded. Compelled to have recourse to the ruinous expedients which we had employed in 1794, it bought up corn at a high price, and retailed it at a loss.

But how was it to provide for this expense, and for all the others concomitant on the revolution ? The first plan adopted was that of imposing a tax on capital, and to exact three per cent. from all those who possessed estates exceeding five thousand crowns in value. But the collection of this supply proceeded slowly, and the public necessities each day became more and more urgent : it was therefore found necessary to call in the aid of those enormous contributions levied on the principal families of Rome—



Rome—revolutionary measures, it is true—measures fraught with ruin even to the multitude, since they compelled those families to curtail their expenses, to leave their domestics destitute of occupation, their tradesmen destitute of business, their workmen destitute of employment. But the circumstances were imperious: nor is it easy to remedy the inveterate evils generated by a radically defective administration: it is not the work of a few months to re-animate agriculture and industry, paralysed by several successive centuries of ignorance and supine neglect.

What will nevertheless astonish all those who were acquainted with the deplorable condition of the Ecclesiastical State, is the exertions which it was able to bear even after the dismemberment of its two richest provinces, the legations of Bologna and Ferrara. By this loss the Holy See had expiated its first offences against the French republic. A second time it aroused her resentment: our army advanced as far as Tolentino: a contribution of thirty-five millions was demanded: the court of Rome found means to furnish it, partly in specie, partly in diamonds which at first were admitted as part of the payment; afterward the value of the diamonds was excluded from the account; and the pope was obliged to complete in cash the full amount of the contribution. To this sum if we add the requisitions in kind, the produce of pillage, the spoils of churches, the taxes imposed on the principal families, &c. &c. we shall not be guilty of exaggeration in asserting, that, from that country apparently so poor, there have been drawn by various modes nearly two hundred millions of livres\*. It is true, indeed, that its means are now exhausted—that the chief sources of its artificial wealth are dried up—that speedy diligence must be exerted to open others, as the only expedient to save that state from falling to dissolution at the very moment of its reviviscence. One of the most effectual measures for warding off that calamity is to recall the fine arts which have been banished by the revolutionary tumult from that land which seems to be their true birth-place. Even without awaiting the return

\* Above eight millions sterling.

turn of peace, the new government have already bestowed their attention on that desirable object, and their efforts have been seconded by France.

It is some months since the French directory have called for the resurrection of that academy of painting, sculpture, and architecture, from which have come forth some of the great geniuses that reflect lustre on our country. It was proposed to complete the establishment by the association of music; the Roman republic has even created funds for its support, and assigned to it a revenue of sixty-thousand livres to be taken from the thirty millions placed at her disposal.

But that revenue, and the establishment itself, will be of precarious duration so long as the Roman republic remains unconsolidated. If it should be shaken by new convulsions—if the prospect of its permanency should still continue doubtful—if internal and external dangers should threaten its existence, and banish from it the security and leisure of peace—there would then be strong reason to fear lest that capital of the arts should lie buried under the ruins of the papacy.

We have now conducted the pontificate of Pius VI. even beyond that catastrophe which, in prematurely inflicting on it the stroke of death, has frustrated all the calculations of probability. We have also assisted at the subversion of his temporal throne, and the first operations of the popular government who have seated themselves in his place. The head of the Roman church still exists for the faithful: but the despot of Rome has disappeared. A few reflexions on that singular event shall conclude our work.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER XXXII.

*Conclusion.*

**H**ISTORY abounds with events which elude the eye of common foresight, and even take sagacity itself unaware. The subversion of the pontifical throne cannot appear surprising except to those who are void of reflexion. Its long duration is much more astonishing than its rapid fall; an assertion whose truth is proved to demonstration by the series of facts which we have related.

For the artificial existence of the government of the Ecclesiastical State, justly comparable to a colossus with feet of clay, no other cause could be assigned than the illusion by which it was environed. But, within the last fifty years in particular, how many circumstances concurred in dissipating that illusion!—the abolition of the Society of Jesus—the progress of philosophy, so formidable to sacred prejudices—the efforts of almost all the sovereigns to strip the Holy See of its usurpations—the continuity and impunity of their successes, &c. &c.

The pontiff's temporal authority was so intimately interwoven with the divinity of his mission, that it was impossible to render the latter doubtful without rendering the former precarious. An elective sovereign, elevated to the throne at the approach of old age and condemned to die without posterity, could not strike deep roots around

around him, or increase his respectability by alliances. His family, taking advantage of his transient splendor, might indeed excite envy, but could not, like those of other sovereigns, derive numerous supports from the operation of hope, from the permanency of their influence, from that respect which is mechanically paid to nobility of blood. Thus the sceptred pontiff stood isolated in the midst of his court, and had no other support than the superstitious zeal to which he was indebted for his exaltation. His interests were connected only with those of religion: through it he ruled; and with it he must fall, unaided by any auxiliaries except the obscure and impotent herd of devotees.

The personal talents of the pope could alone compensate the fragility of the foundations on which his throne rested. But what could be expected of a pontiff who, by the tedious duration of his reign, fatigued the impatience of his presumptive successors—alienated the minds of the people by his exactions—disgusted all ranks by the crying abuses of nepotism—successively lost all those prerogatives which had ever been deemed sacred—and, by his errors as well as his reverses, convinced even the vulgar throng that the vicar of Jesus-Christ was but a frail mortal?

In endowing Pius with some virtues which would have rendered him an estimable character in a private station, nature had refused him all those great qualities which support a throne in tempestuous times, especially that providence which prepares its possessor to meet anticipated events, and that dexterity which enables him to elude their influence. He had not even those energetic vices which sometimes procure a pardon for criminal deeds. To be able to face the existing circumstances, he ought to have united the moderation of Benedict XIV. with the firmness of Sixtus V.: but Pius's moderation was never any other than timidity—his firmness, than transient obstinacy.

If indeed, himself incapable of guiding the reins of government with a vigorous hand, he had resigned them to a minister of superior ability—if he had possessed the art of combining in association the ambition of the great and the assent of the people—all might yet have been well with him. But this was not the case; on the contrary,

trary, his mistrust and vanity excluding all those who would have been able to afford assistance to his incapacity, Pius neither knew how to sway the sceptre himself nor suffer it to be swayed by others.

Under his long pontificate, the sinews of that government which of itself was so enervate, became still farther relaxed. No vigilance was discernible in the police, no severity in the proceedings of justice, no order in the finances. There was nobody at Rome to command, nobody to obey. The ministers themselves felt and acknowledged their impotence: seldom was an instance discovered of their wish to injure—more seldom still, of their energy. They had more than once been heard to say, with pitiful ingenuousness, in answer to reclamations which they allowed to be just, “We will give orders; but we are sure that they will not be executed.”

The grandes of the Ecclesiastical State were neither the adversaries nor the supporters of that pusillanimous government. Without feeling any interest in its prosperity, they lived, with respect to it, in the most apathic neutrality. The splendor of their race, and their great fortunes, might have given them at least some influence: but effeminacy and slavery had rendered them so degenerate that they would not have made any greater efforts to produce a revolution in Rome than they did to prevent it. They stood an unresisting prey for the first invader, whether he came with views of conquest or of emancipation. At the approach of the French army, they advanced to meet liberty, not with the enthusiasm of men worthy of its blessings, but with the docility of slaves. Fortunately for themselves, fortunately for the people, none of the nobles made any attempt at resistance: and their passive acquiescence is attributable still less to their want of energy than to their profound indifference for the government under which they lived.

Nevertheless, with such supports, with troops whose composition and discipline were become proverbial, with a discontented people, Pius dared to provoke the French republic. Twice he had disdained to overturn his tottering throne: its subversion was not an exploit whence he could hope to derive an accession of glory: Is the axe employed to cut down reeds? But an additional crime

crime decided the doom of the Ecclesiastical State. And although it should be proved that Pius had no direct participation in that criminal deed, 'tis to him nevertheless, to his want of skill, his improvidence, his blind obstinacy, his fanatic provocations, that we must attribute every thing which prepared and accelerated the catastrophe of which he has fallen the victim. Under him, the Roman state had for many years been gradually perishing in slow agonies: at the frown of exasperate France, it only completed the act of dying which was already begun.

It will never experience a resurrection, whatever may be the events which Italy is foredoomed to witness. The faithful catholics may yet continue to bestow the appellation of "pope" on their spiritual chief, established wherever circumstances shall permit: they may, notwithstanding this new tempest by which their church has been shaken, still repeat that "the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it:" but that amphibious sovereign, half man half god—for whom the sceptre and the censer jointly challenged the homage of mankind—has for ever disappeared; and, viewed under that twofold aspect, he will be regretted by none.

Time will determine whether those who were his subjects—corrupted and enervated by every thing which can degrade the manly character—are worthy of being republicans. Whatever may be the form of the government on which they settle their choice, they will soon perceive that they could not but gain by any change; and, convinced that their so-long-retarded regeneration could not otherwise have been effected than by the excess of former abuses and degradation, they will perhaps at some future day bless the pontificate of Pius the Sixth.

THE END.

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